

# fifth estate

Special Issue: **D.I.Y.**

**We Can Make It Happen:  
OURSELVES!**



**Tributes to Don LaCoss:**

**Ron Sakolsky  
&  
U.S. Surrealists**

**Haymarket Martyrs  
GUILTY!  
So, What?**

**Anarchy \* Pirate Radio \* Sex \* Communal Living \* Media \* Culture**

**Is Everything We Thought  
About Diet Wrong?**

Author Lierre Keith, author of *The Vegetarian Myth*, says, "Yes," and gets a cayenne-laced pie in the face

Spring 2011 \$4

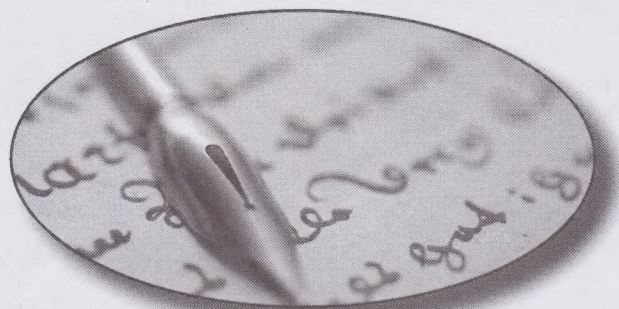


New FE Web Site: [www.fifthestate.org](http://www.fifthestate.org)



## Our Readers Respond...

# Letters



### Cuba's Future

I, too, have fears about the Americanization of Cuba and that it will end up "just like other Caribbean resorts" and that IMF-driven and other economic decisions will lead to the end of the many services provided to everyone and a change in the life and culture and well-being of its citizens. [See "Adios, Socialismo," by Walker Lane, Summer *FE* 2010.]

I agree that it's "likely that the island's future is already determined by its re-integration into the global economy" and its historic lack of "capacity for self-reliance."

But, I also think that this "likely" is still only a "likely." Cuba has surprised many people over the years. Who thought it would survive and maintain a semblance of their commitment to sharing its wealth after the downfall of the Soviet bloc? What was the likelihood that Castro would not be assassinated even with the experience, effectiveness and track-records of the CIA and the Mob?

My attitude is not to give up on the future. It's not here yet. My hope is Cuba will emerge with a new approach that will help it maintain many of the real positives including its health program, education, concern for gender equality, community development, maintain control of their land and industries, and that it will lose its somewhat frightened authoritarian approach to governing.

The fact that the Ladies in White were permitted to march regularly and the release of some political prisoners are good developments. This attitude may appear naive. I may be, just as the cynical take comfort in their correct views of the world. It is comforting to "know" what is unknowable.

If I had to make a bet it would be difficult to conceive of a world in 2110 (if this small planet still houses civilizations) that did not have a McDonald's or more likely a Mr. Noodle on every street corner run by mega corporations that also control governance.

But for now, my hope is that some of the intelligent, well-trained and egalitarian people in positions of power and influence will lead Cuba to a more enlightened and hopeful future.

That they will have some ability to balance the necessity to bring positive and meaningful change and create a different kind of relationship with the elephant of the north. One that brings wealth that can be shared and used for the betterment of all Cubans and does not relinquish ownership of their little island.

~A friend in Canada

**Walker Lane responds:** The letter writer above is a *Fifth Estate* subscriber and Sustainer, and wrote for the *FE* in the 1960s. He has traveled to Cuba many times.

I like my friend's optimism about the future of the island, but he's absolutely dystopian in his (not so optimistic) view that fast food corporations will dominate the planet's politics in the future.

In my article, I talked about the Jamaicaization of Cuba—a return to its pre-Revolution status as a tourist destination, with sharp class divisions, high crime, and few social benefits. Perhaps a better phrase would have been Vietnamization, referring not to the 1970s American military strategy prior to the ignominious defeat of the U.S., but to the type of economy and political structure that country currently has.

Vietnam today is marked by continued authoritarian rule, a command economy in the state sector, large western corporate investment drawn by low wages, with little for the poor. It still refers to itself as a communist nation which it does so only through a grave misunderstanding of the term.

Can Cuba resist this? The more a small country is immersed in the world market, the less opportunity it will have to control its own economic destiny. And, it looks like the process I described in my article is accelerating.

Cuba, like all nations, is facing budget deficits and they are dealing with it in the same manner as the overtly capitalist economies: austerity and shedding workers.

An August 18 Associated Press article quotes President Raúl Castro as saying, "We know that there are hundreds of thousands of unnecessary workers on the budget and labor books, and some analysts calculate that the excess of jobs has surpassed 1 million."

The country's labor minister, Margarita Gonzalez, assures the nation's nervous workers that, "Cuba will not employ massive firings in a manner similar to neoliberal cutbacks," but when the state identifies upwards to a half million workers as redundant in state employ, it's the beginning of a class of poor like in other countries.

The global financial crisis and the damage suffered from three hurricanes in recent years has left the island's economy in a deficit to the point where it is unable to pay back credits they owe to China and elsewhere. As it is, Cuba is slashing spending on importing food

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The screenshot shows the Fifth Estate website interface. At the top, it says "Fifth Estate" and "D.I.Y. — We Can Make It Happen: OURSELVES!". Below this is a navigation menu with links: Home, About, Contact, Buy, Subscribe, Donate. The main content area features several article teasers with images and titles, including "On Blasphemy and Imagination: Arab Surrealism Against Islam" by Don LaCoss, "Visit the new Fifth Estate web site: www.fifthestate.org", and "Venezuelan anarchists see Noam Chomsky as Chavez's Clown" by Octavio Alberola. There are also smaller sections for "Don LaCoss, 1964-2011" and "Marie Mason Update".

This issue is dated Spring 2011 and follows our Summer 2010 number. It was intended for publication on November 1, but the tragic death of our friend and comrade, Don LaCoss, who was editing the issue, is the reason for our interruption in publishing.

Death's scythe slices always cruelly, often unexpectedly, sweeping away those we cherish and need without regard for those left in grief. So it was with Don LaCoss, who succumbed on January 31 to complications from a respiratory illness he had been fighting for months.

Don was editing the issue in between bouts of illness, while tending to his family, and his academic pursuits. As sick as he often was, he kept at the tasks of producing the magazine he was determined to finish. On the evening of his death, he sent an email about perhaps being too sick to finish

or even dying, but remained hard at work. The loss to Don's wife, Susan, and their young son, Benjamin, is incalculable, as it is with those of us who worked with him over the last several years.

The geographic distance between the *Fifth Estate* staff and our process of rotating editorship means that issues are produced all across the country, sometimes by those of us who have never met in person. All of us, though, were acquainted enough with Don, through direct contact, phone, or email, to appreciate his rigorous commitment to anarchist ideals, his scholarship, his wit, his perseverance, and his fairness. There is a terrible hole in the life of all who knew him.

The reason you are holding this magazine in your hands at all, what we call "Don's issue," is due to the commitment by Lauri Hoff, who was working

*continued on page 7*

Visit the new *Fifth Estate* web site:

**www.fifthestate.org**

The *Fifth Estate* website has been re-designed by Paul Novitski of Juniper Webcraft (juniperwebcraft.com), a software and design house committed to progressive change. We are tremendously grateful to Paul and his colleagues at Juniper for their skill and design capabilities.

The *Fifth Estate* is a cooperative, non-profit, anarchist project published since 1965 by a volunteer collective of friends and comrades. We are committed to non-dogmatic, action-oriented writing and activity to bring about a new world.



As opposed to professionals who publish to secure wages, or those who invest in the media information industry, we produce this magazine as an expression of our resistance to an unjust and destructive society. No copyright. No paid staff. No ads.

*Fifth Estate*, P.O. Box 201016, Ferndale MI 48220  
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# Surrealist, Comrade, Dear Friend, Colleague...

## A Surrealist Statement on Don (1964-2011)

**W**hen our friend Myrna Rochester, an expert on the surrealist, Rene Crevel, told us it was necessary for us to meet someone interested in surrealism who was finishing his doctorate at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, we were skeptical, even perhaps somewhat hostile. There are, after all, lots of people interested in surrealism, but most only in a superficial way. But when we met Don LaCoss, we were impressed; not only did he know as much about surrealism as we did, but he loved it just as much.

He was committed to poetry, freedom, and love—to their exaltation in daily life and to their actualization in the phenomenal world. It was as if we had known him forever or, as if we had found, after searching

for years, a long lost friend. We immediately began to elaborate, and continued to elaborate, a beautiful conversation about projects, hopes, and dreams that were mutually inspiring and beneficial. That was a part of Don's way of living; always sharing ideas and inspirations.

Working with him was always fun, and



wherever he was, there was laughter and pleasure and games. He was fortunate to find Susan Crutchfield who shared his enthusiasms and he experienced the great joys and magic of childhood with their son Benjamin. Every day was a passionate one for him. He did not waste a minute, but filled his hours with explorations in the emancipation of the imagination and his efforts toward actualization of his imagination in daily life. After

all, what now exists was at one time only imagined, and Don's imagination was wild and free. He used his critical powers to attack alienation, reification, and false consciousness, and urged us "not to shy away from looking back on history to help imagine the unimaginable post-capitalist future."

In the introduction Don wrote to Michael Lowy's *Morning Star: surrealism, marxism, anarchism, situationism utopia*, published by the University of Texas Press, he wrote that "surrealism with its commitments to an unorthodox Freudo-Hegelianism attempts to abolish unfreedom by the self-liberation of individual consciousness and the simultaneous transformation of the social world." In *Surrealism in '68: Paris, Prague, Chicago*, he analyzed that pivotal historic period in relationship to surrealism and the surrealist groups of that era. It was a surrealist slogan "*Be realistic, Demand the Impossible!*" that emboldened the rebels of Paris 1968.

Don undertook the editing of the Surrealist Series at the University of Texas Press after the loss of his friend

*continued...next page*





Franklin Rosemont. He was currently working on a book to be published by that press on George Henein, Egyptian surrealism, and surrealism in the Arab world entitled the *Imp of the Perverse*. The jazz musician Sun Ra was the subject of an inspired essay by Don published in Ron Sakolsky's magazine *Oyster Catcher*. With Ray Spiteri in 2003, Don edited *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*.

At 46, he still had so much to contribute; what a loss to us all and to surrealism. Don's polemical side can be found in his contributions recently to our surrealist manifestos: *Another Paradise Lost: A Surrealist Program of Demands on the Gulf of Mexico Oil Disaster, No War on the Moon!*, and *No Compromise: In the Defense of the Dark Side of the Moon*, that appeared in the *Earth First!* Journal.

Paul Garon, author with Beth Garon, of *Woman with Guitar: Memphis Minnie's Blues*, described Don's style as "a wonderfully sharp and armor-piercing weapon." Don was most recently putting together works for the International Surrealist Exhibition being organized by Joseph Jablonski in Harrisburg, Penn., on the theme of the Mayan Millennium in 2012.

Part of Don's special passion was to search out images of emancipation in comics or to detourn them to bring out their latent content, thus, remaking the past, inspiring the present, and revolutionizing the image of the future all at the same time and with glorious humor.



The work Don was doing is essential work for human emancipation, and it must continue. It is our plan to do a collection of his essays and to finish his book on Henein and surrealism. His work with the *Fifth Estate*, alternative publications, and causes he

held dear are incredibly significant. It is in these places that is found the laboratory of new ideas, the ones that shine like bright stars; the places where freedom stretches itself, and where the possibilities of a marvelous future are awakening.

*The Surrealist Movement in the U.S. Penelope Rosemont, Paul Garon, Beth Garon, David Roediger, Michael Lowy, Joseph Jablonski, Gale Ahrens, Tamara Smith, Joel Williams, Guy Ducornet, read and*



Susan, Don, and Benjamin—their annual first snowfall picture. 2010

## On Don LaCoss's Passing —a tribute by Ron Sakolsky

One of Don's last research projects was on the history of Egyptian surrealism, so it is fitting that his death was poetically heralded by a popular insurrection in the streets of Cairo.

As the founding manifesto of the 1973 Arab Surrealist Movement in Exile exclaimed as if in anticipation of the possibilities opened up by recent events in Tunisia and Egypt: "We call upon individuals and the masses to unleash their instincts against all forms of repression, including the repressive 'reason' of the bourgeois order. We poison the intellectual atmosphere with the elixir of the imagination, so that the poet will realize himself in realizing the historical transformation of poetry. We liberate language from the prisons and stockmarkets of capitalist confusion."

Don, Sir Cuddles & Benjamin



Correspondingly, for Don, poetry and revolution were always hovering in the air like ripe fruits waiting to be plucked by those dubwise enough to get the joke. Like the "honesty" of Guy Fawkes, who was executed on Jan 31, 1606 for his part in the Gunpowder Plot on the British parliament, the incendiary black humor of Don LaCoss, who died on the same day 405 years later, was, in the words of André Breton, like "a spark in search of a powder keg."

Feb 2, 2011



# Green Scares Marie Mason

**despite supporters world wide—Mason loses appeal**

**M**arie Mason, who is serving the longest prison term of any Green

Scare prisoner, lost her appeal as the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati on December 16 upheld her almost 22-year sentence for two acts of eco-sabotage.

Following oral arguments in front of the court in October, Mason's attorney, Anastatse Markou, said he was encouraged by the questions the judges asked about the harshness of the sentence which is the basis of the appeal, but it came to naught. As usual, American justice, not impartially blindfolded to her supplicants, but with one eye open, winked obscenely at the power she serves so dutifully.

Green Scare is the name given to recent prosecutions of radical environmental and animal liberation activists who are labeled terrorists by the government and given exceptionally long sentences. No one has been killed or injured as a result of their actions. Mason accepted a plea agreement that called for a sentence of 15-20 years, although the judge tacked on even more time to the maximum agreed upon with the prosecution.

It's not clear whether any further avenues within the legal system are worth pursuing. An appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, given its right-wing composition, and the cost involved,

makes it probably prohibitive.

In early July, Mason was remanded to solitary confinement for a month before being transferred to a facility in Fort Worth, Texas. She was told by



University Biotechnology Support Project in East Lansing, Michigan, a genetically modified organism (GMO) research site. In 1999, she and her husband at the time, Frank Ambrose, set fire to research records at the lab causing considerable damage to the building. Ambrose became a snitch for the federal government almost ten years

later, taping incriminating conversations with Mason, and later with dozens of other activists around the country at the behest of the FBI.

Ambrose is serving a nine-year term in spite of all his work as a government informant. He was sentenced by US District Judge Paul Maloney who also presided in Mason's case. Ambrose and Mason had been divorced prior to their arrests.

There were initial fears that Mason had been transferred to a newly established Communications Management Unit (CMU) at the Federal Medical Center (FMC) Carswell in Fort Worth. In CMUs, prisoners are subjected to a heavily repressive regimen that

allows only severely reduced contact with friends and family.

Lawyers with the New York City-based Center for Constitutional Rights say the feds have consistently denied that Carswell is a CMU. However, the wing Mason is in is clearly a special control unit, and has restrictive conditions.

Carswell's web site states that it "provides specialized medical and mental health services to female offenders," but the facility is notorious

prison officials at Federal Correction Institution (FCI) Waseca (Minnesota) that her confinement and transfer, during which she was not allowed to retain many of her personal belongings including books and photos, was "administrative" and not punitive. Mason had been a model prisoner and was teaching guitar to other prisoners. She was known for her peacekeeping efforts inside the prison.

Mason's plea agreement included the crime of arson at the Michigan State



for its bad services for ill or disturbed prisoners and has been subject of past law suits.

Although Mason says she preferred the prison in Minnesota with its larger population, she is reconstructing her life at Carswell and reports that she has improved access to fresh foods to accommodate her vegan diet.

Mason receives support from environmentalists and animal rights activists world-wide, many who do not approve of her tactics, but are appalled at her harsh sentence. She says she wants to assure them that, contrary to rumors, she steadfastly maintains her vegan diet even though so doing was beginning to erode her health given the lack of proper food at the Minnesota facility.

Supporters help provide Mason with money for food of her choice from the prison commissary, stamps, clothing, supplies, phone calls and internet communication. Mason's son and daughter receive stipends from the Rosenberg Fund for Children that makes grants to the offspring of persecuted activists. The fund is administered in part by Robert Meerpol, one of the two children of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg who were executed as atomic spies in 1953 following a frame-up trial.

In other developments, Mason urgently asks that her supporters not send money directly to her commissary account, since when it reaches a certain level the government confiscates the overage to pay toward her \$4 million restitution she has been ordered to repay.

All donations should be sent to her mother, Karin Mason, at PO Box 352, Stanwood MI 49346. Money sent to her is put into Mason's commissary account as needed. Please circulate this information.

Benefits continue to support Mason including recent ones in Cincinnati, and another in October in Detroit's Trumbullplex featuring singer/songwriter David Rovics which raised over \$700.

Mason welcomes mail, but please contact her before sending her anything other than a letter to insure she can receive a particular item.

Her address is:

**Marie Mason #04672-061**

**FMC Carswell**

**P.O. Box 27137**

**Fort Worth, TX 76127**

In other depressing legal news, Green Scare prisoner, Eric McDavid, sentenced to almost 20-years imprisonment for conspiring to commit a crime with a government informant following a frame-up trial, had his appeal for a re-hearing denied before the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. This essentially ends all legal remedies for him. Details are at his site [supporteric.org](http://supporteric.org).

## Don's Issue... continued from page 3

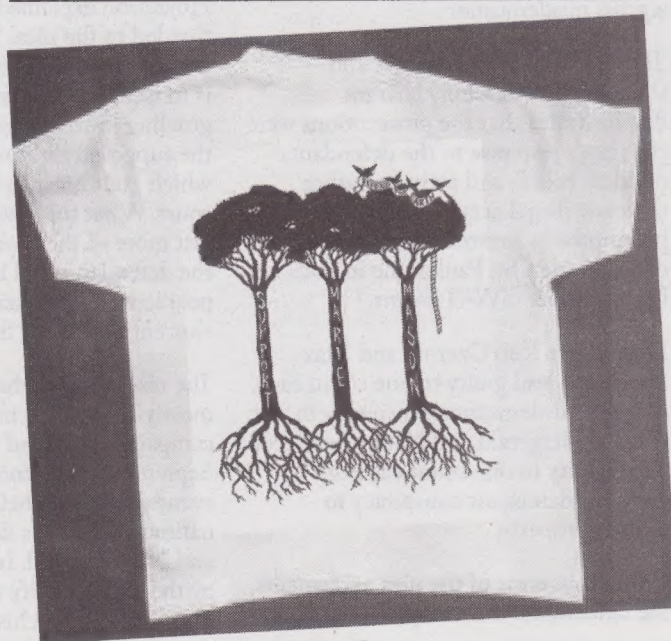
with him as the designer of the issue, to finish what Don had started. Our gratitude to her is immense and we hope she remains active with this publication.

Some articles may seem outdated, given that they chronicle events which occurred as long ago as last June. However, we are retaining them since the information is still relevant and like much in the radical press, appear nowhere else.

We want to give special thanks to those who have made donations to keep this publication on a firm financial footing and to those who have renewed their subscriptions. Also, a welcome to new readers who join us at this point in our 46-year history of printing.

The next issue, with its theme of Anarchist Fiction (see the call for submissions in this issue, pg. 9) and the subsequent one on Revolution (appropriate, given what is happening in the world) are already taking shape.

But for now, mourn the loss of Don LaCoss, but celebrate a life of radical commitment, and enjoy Don's issue.



### NEW! Support Marie Mason T-Shirts

\$18 ppd. XS, S, M, L, XL in unisex American Apparel  
Available in black or brown with white image

Make checks to "Karin Mason"

Send to PO Box 352, Stanwood, MI 49346

**[www.supportmariemason.org](http://www.supportmariemason.org)**



# Remaining RNC 8 Defendants Accept Misdemeanor Plea Agreement

**community service sentence but no jail time**

*ST. PAUL, MN*—The case against eight Twin Cities anarchists known as the RNC 8 came to a conclusion October 19. When the remaining four defendants pled guilty to misdemeanors resolving their legal and political battle stemming from arrests at the 2008 Republican National Convention.

Last September, county prosecutors dropped all charges against RNC 8 defendants Monica Bicking, Eryn Trimmer, and Luce Guillén-Givins. In June, RNC 8 defendant Erik Oseland entered a guilty plea to one count of conspiracy to commit criminal damage, a gross misdemeanor.

The dismissal of the charges and the reduction of felony charges demonstrates that the prosecutions were the state's response to the defendants' political beliefs and activism rather than any illegal acts. The eight were preemptively arrested before the convention in St. Paul, some in raids by heavily armed SWAT teams.

Defendants Rob Czernik and Max Specktor plead guilty to one count each of gross misdemeanor conspiracy to riot. Garrett Fitzgerald and Nathanael Secor plead guilty to one count each of gross misdemeanor conspiracy to destroy property.

Under the terms of the plea agreements, the defendants will complete 100 hours

of community service, one to two years probation, and pay a \$200 fine. There is no jail time or restitution. Additionally, the defendants will not be required to testify in criminal proceedings arising from their cases.

Jaime Hokanson, of the RNC 8 Defense Committee, said, "This plea must be embarrassing for [the county]. Their case was so weak from the beginning that through political pressure, they have been forced from pursuing felony terrorism charges into settling on a plea with no jail time."

Hokanson explained the circumstances that led to the plea: "The way the criminal justice system actually works is to wear down defendants through grueling proceedings, not to honor the supposed right to trial by jury in which guilt must be proven in open court. What the state calls 'justice' is just more of the coercion and force that the defendants and thousands of other people were organizing against [at the convention] in the first place."

The resolution of the case marks the mostly successful end of a wide-ranging campaign to defend the RNC 8. Since September 2008, fundraisers and other events have been held in dozens of cities nationwide, and as far away as Russia and New Zealand. In spite of efforts by the state to vilify the defendants for their openly anarchist politics, monetary

donations to the RNC 8 Defense Committee surged.

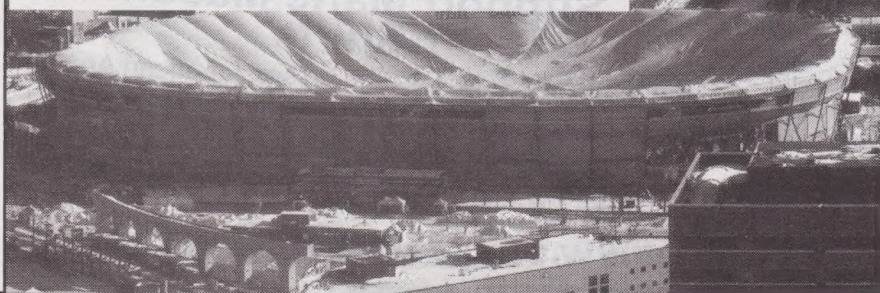
Thousands of people signed a petition that was delivered to the Ramsey County, Minnesota prosecuting attorney before the original felony terrorism charges were dropped in April 2009. Supporters continued to demand that all charges be dropped—as a result, defendants Monica Bicking, Luce Guillén-Givins and Eryn Trimmer were released from prosecution.

"We have long held that the charges against the RNC 8 were politically motivated, as the defendants were openly organizing resistance to the Republican National Convention as anarchists," said Hokanson. "Police intimidation, harassment and slander of activists in the lead up to the RNC was part of a broader strategy of criminalizing political organizing, and this view is now widely accepted in the Twin Cities," he said. "Many of us are disappointed we will not have the chance to further expose the criminalization of dissent at trial, but we are pleased the state did not succeed in sending eight respected activists to prison."

RNC 8 supporters planned an array of solidarity activities during the expected trial including a series of six joint fundraisers with other social justice organizations. Those events will go on as planned, demonstrating a continuing bond with Twin Cities social justice causes. This solidarity helped strengthen the activist community against repression from the state, as evidenced in the broad support of anti-war activists in the wake of FBI raids in September.

"Supporting the RNC 8 through their ordeal has made our community and

**the karmic deflation of the Metrodome**



*continued...next page*



our movement stronger in many ways," said Melissa Hill of the RNC 8 Defense Committee. "The judicial system always exerts pressure on everyone, and activists are not exceptional in this. Now, our struggle against state repression moves into a new phase. The continued FBI harassment of activists in our community calls on us to stand together in solidarity to fight back against attempts to destroy our movement. We will meet this call." But as usual, the state shows no shame for its repression. In October, a National Guard advertisement hung on the side of the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome in Minneapolis, proposed site of the 2012 Democratic National Convention, depicted Guard members being deployed against protesters during the 2008 events.

The huge multiple-panel advertisement, stretching around the sports facility depicts various Minnesota Viking players above the text, "FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE." Another panel shows battle-ready National Guard above text reading, "MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD...MINNESOTA'S FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE." The photo is a composite image derived from a September 1 National Guard press image showing 150 soldiers and a helicopter deployed against peaceful protesters during Day One of the convention.

Nigel Parry, coordinator of the RNC '08 Report project, a citizen's archive of media reports, government documents, and other resources relating to the convention, said: "Of the more than 800 people arrested during the Republican Convention, 75 percent of those were seized in mass arrests. On September 1, the Minnesota National Guard, coordinating with police, drove protesters, bystanders, and concert-goers into the first of three mass arrests that took place during the RNC.

"Using percussion grenades and teargas, the army and police drove protesters and onlookers where the protesters, together with members of the public attempting to reach the free 'Take Back Labor Day' concert on Harriet Island, were surrounded and detained. Over 200 people were arrested and held for up to 72 hours. No one arrested was ultimately prosecuted and there is a civil suit against the City of Saint Paul for the mass arrest."

Parry also said, "It is unbelievable that the National Guard would use an advertising image under a banner declaring 'Minnesota's first line of defense', which depicts its soldiers being deployed against Minnesotans and other American citizens. The fact that this image appears hanging on the proposed site of the 2012 Democratic National Convention completes the Orwellian picture perfectly."

For more information, visit <http://www.RNC8.org>. Also follow us on Twitter: @defendthernc8.

## **Fifth Estate #385 Summer 2011**

Theme: fiction issue—Visions of Anarchy

In a 1905 letter from prison, Alexander Berkman wrote: "None of us are ready for anarchy, though many are for anarchism." In this letter, Berkman defined anarchism as a philosophy, and anarchy as a social state, the end goal of anarchism.

The next issue of *Fifth Estate* will explore visions of anarchism and anarchy through fiction. From fictional struggles of anarchists in the past and present to stories of an anarchist future, we will explore the many facets of anarchism as a philosophy, anarchy as a social state, and anything and everything else in between. We will be open to any style of fiction that carries this theme. Be creative. Tell us a good story, but don't just entertain, inspire us! Challenge us to see anarchism from a new perspective, or in a different light.

### **Some possible suggestions for story ideas:**

- Describe what happens when a non-anarchist finds them self alone in an anarchist society/culture. How do they react? Do they integrate? Do they rebel? What conflicts will they face?
- Create a successful collective and envision the process the collective goes through to welcome a new member. To what end was the collective established? How do they operate? What is their process for bringing in a new member? What interpersonal relationships come into play (friendships, relationships, etc.)?
- Create a piece of alternate history in which a social revolution took place, and present day people live in a state of Anarchy. What is their life like? (ex. Anarchist victory in the Spanish Civil war).

In addition to fiction stories, we will also be open to a few select submissions of literary criticism on anarchist literature and/or literary criticism from an anarchist perspective.

### **Some topics to explore might include:**

- What constitutes anarchist literature?
- What is an anarchist literary aesthetic? Is the term "anarchist literary aesthetic" an oxymoron?
- Analyze a piece of anarchist fiction. What makes it anarchist? It's subject? It's theme? It's style?
- Analyze a piece of literature from an anarchist perspective. How does this perspective affect our appreciation of the piece of literature in question?

Please keep all finished manuscripts to fewer than 2,500 words.

Submit completed manuscripts for fiction, and proposals for criticism to: [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org)

Please include *Fifth Estate 385* in the subject line, along with the title of your piece.

### **You may also mail submissions to:**

*Fifth Estate*

P.O. Box 201016

Ferndale, MI 48220

Deadline: 6/15/2011

Publication date: 7/30/2011



# The Haymarket Martyrs

## GUILTY! So What?

by Timothy Messer-Kruse



In Chicago's Haymarket Square on the night of May 4, 1886, a dynamite bomb was thrown at a squadron of police during a rally of striking workers. The bomb blast and ensuing gunfire resulted in the deaths of police officers and workers. Eight anarchists were tried for murder and found guilty although the prosecution conceded none of the defendants had thrown the bomb. Four of the men were executed.

The innocence of the convicted men and the unfairness of their trial has been the subject of many accounts. Timothy Messer-Kruse examines the evidence and emerges with a different, but more radical conclusion.

**O**n May 3, 1998, a group of labor activists, trade union officials, and a representative of the National Park Service, stood solemnly in Chicago's Forest Home Cemetery. They gathered on the Sunday following labor's most sacred date, May 1, International Workers Day, to dedicate a memorial to the five Chicago anarchist working-class revolutionaries executed for their part in the 1886 bombing at Haymarket Square which killed seven police.

### At their feet a squat brass plaque read:

"Haymarket Martyrs' Monument has been designated a National Historic Landmark. This monument represents the labor movement's struggle for workers' rights and possesses national significance in commemorating the history of the United States of America. 1997. National Park Service. United States Department of the Interior."

There is a bitter irony in the government memorializing the burial places of the five men it murdered. But there is a greater injustice in its softening their beliefs into a generic longing for "workers' rights." This National Historic Landmark is a bronze insult to the memory of these men because by remembering them as innocent victims of a biased judge and jury their true sacrifice and commitment is conveniently forgotten.

Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engel, Adolph Fischer, and Louis Lingg were not martyrs because they were murdered by the state of Illinois. They were martyrs because they dared to foment a workers' insurrection in the heartland of industrial America. In short, they were guilty as charged, guilty of conspiring to kill police, guilty of being revolutionaries.

For at least half a century, to question the innocence of the Haymarket martyrs has been an act of heresy. Since the early 20th century, progressive scholars have tried to embrace the martyrs' fiery rhetoric and radical beliefs but deny their actions.

Floyd Dell in 1902 famously squared this circle by theorizing that the Chicago anarchists only collected and flourished bombs as a form of propaganda, as a tactic to call attention to their social ideas.

Ever since then, historians, perhaps reflecting their own academic existence, have happily explored the anarchists' writings and pronouncements as if these were totally theoretical and insincere, meant to shock the bourgeoisie rather than rally the working class. In this way the martyrs' legal innocence and victimhood has been preserved at the cost of their implicit condemnation as hypocrites and cowards.

Liberal-minded academic historians who have written about Haymarket have simply not questioned the reigning interpretations and have recycled the same unexamined



claims about the case and uncritically drafted their narratives on the same assumptions.

They take no notice of the fact that Louis Lingg and his lawyers never disputed the fact that he manufactured bombs in his apartment, including a flurry of bomb-making just hours before the Haymarket riot. No historian has recorded that August Spies admitted on the witness stand that he kept dynamite and bombs in his editorial office.

Few of the books on the Haymarket bombing and trial mention how George Engel and Albert Parsons attempted to place bulk orders for large caliber Remington revolvers from a gun dealer a couple of months before May, Engel inquiring about purchasing one hundred, Parsons wanting forty or fifty. None mention the testimony of Luther Moulton of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who recounted that Spies told him a year earlier of his plans to "take the city" by force "when the working men attempted to introduce the eight-hour system of labor."

Historians pretend that some great mystery surrounds the identity of the bomber, repeating baseless rumors that the bomb may have been the work of an agent provocateur or the act of a lone worker, disconnected to the anarchist movement. Such speculation was never even supported by those closest to the Chicago anarchists.

Dyer Lum, who took over the *Alarm* when Albert Parsons went on trial and was a regular visitor of the defendants in Cook County jail, wrote in 1891 that the bomber was indeed an anarchist, though he chose not to name him. Emma Goldman told one of her lovers that she also had heard the bomb-thrower was an anarchist.

### The man who threw the bomb

In fact, there is little mystery about the bomber's identity. The overwhelming weight of evidence bears down on one man—Rudolph Schnaubelt, defendant Michael Schwab's brother-in-law. In the courtroom, Schnaubelt was identified by two eye witnesses as the man who threw the bomb.

Decades later the son of Dr. Ernst Schmidt, head of the anarchist's legal defense committee, revealed that his late father had told him that Schnaubelt was in fact the bomber. George Schilling, the labor leader who had the closest friendship with many of the Chicago anarchists, late in his life confided in a young librarian, Agnes Ingles, who was collecting anarchist papers for the University of Michigan Labadie Collection, that Schnaubelt, "did the job." Oscar Neebe, who served seven years in Joliet prison for his small role in the bombing conspiracy, late in life reportedly told a friend and neighbor that he believed Schnaubelt was the bomber.

More importantly, historians' ongoing fixation on the identity

of the bomber and the fact that the bomber was never prosecuted, has only served to cloud the most important historical fact of this entire episode. What they so conveniently downplay is that the bombing was the culminating moment of a radical group that actually dared to plan and stage a violent insurrection against the capitalist state.

The state's attorney called this a conspiracy to murder and succeeded in hanging four men (and pushing Louis Lingg to suicide) upon the charge. As repressive as such a prosecution was, its underlying logic was sound. The Chicago anarchists had conspired to kill police that night, though murder was not their object, only in their minds a

necessary action to liberate the working class.

When historians discuss the conspiracy that led to the Haymarket meeting and bombing, they focus all their attention on a secret meeting

held in the basement of Grief's Saloon on Monday, May 3, the



Chicago anarchists protesting at the Haymarket Martyrs Memorial dedication ceremony, May 3, 1998. They objected to the erasure of the anarchist politics of the four executed men. —photo: Julie Hernandez

evening after the bloody riot at the McCormick Reaper Factory and the night before the Haymarket meeting. The plans discussed at that meeting—to muster their militia companies and fight police—are then dismissed as the idle talk of men angry and reacting to the recent confrontation with the cops.

In this way, the explosion at Haymarket is portrayed as the result of a succession of steps in a chain of unfortunate and unforeseen occurrences and not as part of a larger strategy to radicalize trade unions and use them to provoke violent confrontations with agents of the state and ultimately spark a general insurrection.

Throughout the weeks leading up to the great eight-hour strike of the first of May, 1886, those unions that anarchists had succeeded in leading showed little actual interest in winning the eight-hour day. When bosses would concede the eight-hour day, the anarchist-led unions would demand higher pay. If offered higher pay, they demanded higher pay and shorter hours. When one firm offered both a shorter day and higher wages, the union's anarchist leaders demanded that the company shut down its plant in Cincinnati and move the production to Chicago.

### Intransigence makes no sense

The anarchists' focus on provoking confrontation over winning incremental reforms was evident at the central flashpoint of the May Day weekend, the sprawling McCormick Reaper Works. Over the previous year



anarchists had gained a toehold in the McCormick plant but had failed to take control of all the unions representing workers in the factory.

All the unions were severely weakened by a failed strike in March 1886 and by the first of May, the rank and file workers returned to the plant and the most militant leaders had been fired.

Cyrus McCormick, Jr., owner of the Reaper Works, locked-out his workers on Saturday, May 1, as the strike wave began but, eager to avoid inflaming the situation the following Monday when his factory was scheduled to reopen, announced that he was granting his employees the eight-hour day. From a trade-union perspective, McCormick's factory was no longer an issue, but the anarchist leadership targeted it nonetheless.

Such intransigence makes no sense if the Chicago anarchists were, as the federal government's plaque claims, advocates for "worker's rights." But it all makes one coherent picture when their own writings, speeches, and plans are believed. A meeting that preceded all the many skirmishes with police that weekend reveals the deeper nature of their intentions.

The armed wings of Chicago's most militant groups gathered at a small hall on Sunday morning, May 2. George Engel and Adolph Fischer led the meeting as they would the next night when a larger meeting of armed groups was held in the Grief's cellar. The plan that Engel proposed that peaceful morning was one intended not to win a strike or pressure bosses to grant the eight-hour day, but was only conceivable if the goal was a revolutionary take-over of the city.

According to one attendee at that meeting who testified for the state, Engel's plan was for "as soon as it came to a conflict between the police and the Northwestern Groups, that bombs should be thrown into the police stations and the rifle men of the Lehr and Wehr Verein should post themselves in line in a certain distance and whoever would come out should be shot down...then it should proceed in that way until we would come to the heart of the city."

This was not idle talk, but a plan repeated and reconfirmed the following night among a group of radicals who regularly met in secret and drilled with Springfield rifles and tested homemade bombs on the prairie outside the city. Adolph Fischer, who attended both meetings, would have had a unique perspective on what to us today must sound like a fantastic and far-fetched idea: that a small radical group could take over an entire city.

### **The possibility of revolution**

Fischer's older brother had been one of the leaders of the mass strikes that swept the nation in 1877. The older Fischer, and probably Adolph as well, lived in St. Louis at the time and briefly succeeded in wresting control of the city from the authorities in a movement people at the time compared to the Paris Commune. To Fischer and many other radicals of his generation, Engel's plan to forcibly take over the city did not sound impossible or even far fetched, as he had once personally glimpsed the possibility of revolution.

The thirty or so men who sat on wooden benches lined up in rows on the dirt cellar floor of Grief's saloon combined Engel's plan to attack police stations with preparations for a mass rally. They agreed upon a secret code, the word "ruhe," to be published in specific box in Spies' anarchist daily if and when "the revolution" broke out. Upon seeing that signal, the armed militias were to muster at their designated spots and scouts were to be sent to the meeting at the Haymarket and if a riot should break out, they were to attack according to plan.

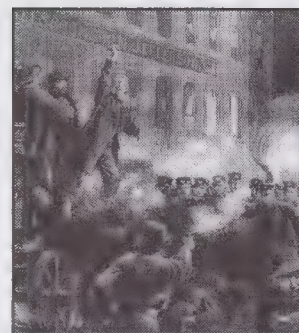
The next day Spies' paper printed the signal and the die was cast. That evening the fateful Haymarket meeting took place and every detail of it was unusual. It was held in a place where the anarchists had never held a mass-meeting before. A place that was selected because the usual place anarchists held their protests, Market Square, was described by Fischer as "a mousetrap" because it backed up to the river.

It was held in the area of the Haymarket square with the most intersecting alleyways and just one block away from the police station led by the most hated police officer in the city, Inspector John Bonfield. One version of the famous handbill announcing the meeting told workers to, "Arm yourselves and Appear in Full Force." The meeting started nearly an hour later than the scheduled time.

Just before the meeting commenced, Louis Lingg carried a heavy satchel filled with bombs to a saloon that was customary meeting place for the Northwest side group and men helped themselves to its contents. One anarchist witness uncooperatively testifying for the state slipped when asked if he knew there would be trouble at the Haymarket meeting and replied, "I knew that much that when the police should come to attack the workingmen that each one should help themselves the best way they could."

All these plans were entirely consistent with what the anarchists themselves had been advocating for years. They distinguished themselves by their absolute rejection of incremental reformism, of business unionism, and of electoral politics.

The anarchist manifesto Parsons and Spies helped to draft in Pittsburgh in 1883 was not idle talk, but a map of their intentions. When the delegates in Pittsburgh declared that, "The work of peaceful education and revolutionary conspiracy well can and ought to run in parallel lines," they described exactly the dual efforts of the Chicago revolutionaries who published newspapers, led marches, sang songs, bored deeply



***Moments after the explosion, the police exchanged gunfire with some in the crowd of workers, scattering the revolutionaries, and leaving three of them dead or dying.***



into existing unions in an effort to transform them, and also stockpiled guns and bombs.

When the Pittsburgh Manifesto declared: "all attempts in the past to reform this monstrous system by peaceable means, such as the ballot, have been futile, and all such efforts in the future must necessarily be so.... there remains but one recourse—*force!*" they weren't merely theorizing.

The outcome was tragic. A phalanx of cops one hundred and sixty strong marched up from their nearby station and ordered the meeting to disperse. A single powerful bomb was thrown, later proven by one of the first uses of chemical forensic evidence used in an American courtroom, to have been made by Lingg.

Moments after the explosion, the police exchanged gunfire with some in the crowd of workers, scattering the revolutionaries, and leaving three of them dead or dying. Besides Mathias Degan who died on the spot, six other officers were mortally injured and sixty wounded, most by the bomb, but some by bullets of a variety of calibers. The battle the anarchists began was not only lost, but the entire labor movement was set back by a tremendous public backlash.

From a radical perspective, it should not be surprising that the trial of these eight radicals fell far below even modern liberal standards of justice. Of course, the police searched homes and seized evidence without warrant. Of course, scores of suspects were dragooned into the station house jail cells and held for days incommunicado. Of course, jurors were hand-picked by court bailiffs. Of course, stands of flags and banners with revolutionary mottoes and bombs and pistols by the basketful were carried into the courtroom in a transparent effort to highlight for the jurors the peril the defendants posed.

What historians fail to point out is that all of these maneuvers were completely within the bounds of law and standard procedure of that benighted time. To charge, as historians have repeatedly done, that prosecutors bent the rules to gain the conviction of these particular revolutionaries obscures the more important point: that the deck was heavily stacked in favor of the state in every criminal prosecution.

Chicago's leading anarchists and revolutionaries were martyred on November 11, 1887. They sacrificed their lives in a miscalculated attempt to live up to their own revolutionary ideas. A century and a quarter later our debt to them is to stop denying their true significance and place in history.

Timothy Messer-Kruse is the author of two forthcoming books reexamining the Haymarket episode. *The Trial of the Haymarket Anarchists: Terrorism and Justice in the Gilded Age* will be published in August by Palgrave Macmillan. *The Haymarket Conspiracy: Transatlantic Anarchists Networks* is due out from the University of Illinois later this year.

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# Making Anarchist Multimedia

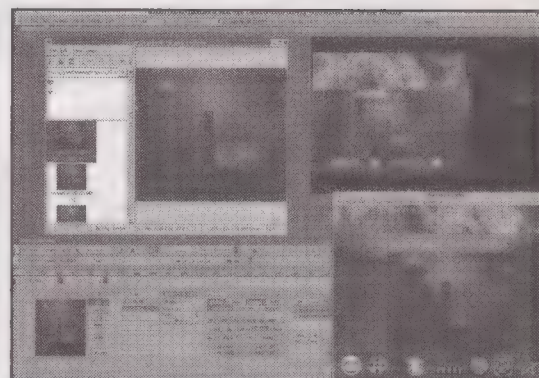
**F**ilm can be a powerful social and political tool. As anarchists, socialists, DIYs, and every other type of fellow traveler, we need to make videos to motivate and inform us. What does an anarchist world look like? What does an anarchist do in a political suspense movie? I challenge storytellers to make movies that answer these questions. What do we want to have them say? Do we have any idea what we want to have happen as a result of people watching our videos?

A Digital Revolution means sophisticated video can now be made using any modern personal computer. Installing Linux as the operating system on your computer is itself a political act for those of us inspired by social justice. Linux is an operating system based on contribution, mutual aid and cooperation. The Free Software movement offers pretty much every imaginable app freely available on install or as a net download. To make movies, utilize applications such as KDenlive or Cinelerra for editing tasks, or my favourite, 3D Blender, which is a superbly competent CG environment.

Having your oppressor supply your materiel is normally associated with guerilla warfare. DIY multimedia making has this modus operandi at it's core, as well. Reusable resources such as films and images fall into the Public Domain every year. The Public Domain being that which is owned by 'Society'. Whatever your approach to multimedia making, a familiarity with copyright law, Creative Commons licences and the Public Domain will smooth your path. Knowledge is power. Laws were enacted to protect a creative's work

from being copied for a period of time so they could recoup their costs and actually earn a living making art. This is called copyright law. The laws were put in place because a society that encourages artists is a healthy society. There is a term limit set on this copyright so that these works become usable to society at large after the copyright expires. This is the legacy the artist leaves society in recognition of the copyright protection they receive. This all means that there are clips in the public domain that can be repurposed to your message.

Danger Dead End, the political multimedia I put together, started as a set of clips from *Waterfront*, a 1941 movie in the Public



level shots under the 'streets are streets' anywhere notion. I created a rocket spewing fiery exhaust crossing the frame to show there is much more going on than simply an American dockside 1940s period piece. The rocket being in a cartoon style tells the audience not to interpret things too literally.

Another example of how to recycle film assets is the use I have made of an old WWI British recruitment poster. The call to serve the "Empire" still has resonance, even the best part of a hundred years later. The concept of Empire comes through to the viewer in *Danger Dead End* even though the Empire of the poster is not the Empire of the film. An anarchist A placed on top of the lion of empire changes the politics into something new entirely.

This article has been no more than an introduction to making anarchist multimedia. A few pointers to show the way how to make it and even perhaps why you should make it. Multimedia is a powerful tool, make something potent with it.

My completed multimedia is to be found on youtube.com, either enter 'Danger Dead End' in the youtube search field or use the URL <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01i0RNJP3Mw>

Ryan Alexander Neily  
 Ryan.Neily@gmail.com  
 Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada



Domain. I assembled and edited images, 3D animation, also adding dialogue and music to the piece. The soundtrack song 'Blue Salsa' was composed and recorded by my friend Colin MacRae on his keyboard.

The clips I took from the movie *Waterfront* are obviously from an older time. To make it work as a future based story I used only street



# Masturbation as DIY Sex

## A Tribute to Onan

**W**hy does the acceptance of masturbation seem to threaten the very foundation of our social structure? Could it be that independent orgasms might lead to independent thoughts? An effective way to keep a population docile and easy to manipulate is by prohibiting childhood masturbation, insisting on the procreative model of sex, upholding marriage and monogamy, withholding sex information, making birth control difficult, trying to end abortion, criminalizing prostitution, condemning homosexuality, censoring sexual entertainment and denying the existence of sexual diversity. That makes everyone a sexual sinner.

Ever wonder why sex with ourselves isn't viewed with any pride? My speculation is, we're a nation of brainwashed romantic-love junkies hooked on a myth that promises us passionate orgasms forever from our very own Prince or Princess Charming. Romance is the drug that leads to monogamous pair bondage that erodes sexual

desire. By the time most of us figure it out, children, property or finances keep us glued together as sexual pleasure diminishes or disappears altogether. Take heart. Partnersex gets better the minute we start improving our own self-loving practices. Start by seeing masturbation as a sexual meditation, and practice regularly for an hour or more. Breathing, move your pelvis like Elvis.

Although orgasm is a nervous-system function that operates without conscious control, your joyful rhapsody can be extended by building up sexual tension, and right after orgasm, not stopping. Sex energy is the life force, and my body doesn't care if it's me with my electric vibrator and a dildo, or a lover's tongue, hand or penis. An orgasm is an orgasm is an orgasm.

Once we embrace masturbation, we can have all the sex we want on our own terms with someone we love who will never abandon us.

—from *"Masturbation Manifesto"* by Betty Dodson



Devon Browning, *Before Work* (2009)

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# A Q&A about DIY with Kathleen Hanna

—by Don LaCoss

Kathleen Hanna is a musician, zine writer, and feminist activist who was at the heart of the riot grrrl movement of the 1990s. This conversation between Ms. Hanna and Don LaCoss unfolded over a couple weeks in June 2010.

**Fifth Estate:** Is it an exaggeration to say that DIY culture helped to launch and sustain the riot grrrl movement?

**Kathleen Hanna:** Not at all. The expectation of unpaid female labor meshed incredibly well with DIY ethics, sometimes making DIY

a slippery slope in terms of feminist activity.

**FE:** Has digital tech taken DIY culture to the next level?

**KH:** The messed up thing is you can work every day from the time you wake up till when you go to sleep making music, writing a blog,

booking shows, making videos, starting your own record company, maintaining your social networking and most people will expect to consume what you do for free!

Similarly, it's okay for a Hollywood movie to make tons of money on product placement because it's expected but if a radical artist sells a song to a movie to keep their project going that's seen as hypocritical and thus unacceptable.

**FE:** Has digital tech continued the zine, mutated the zine, or killed it off?

**KH:** I think zines and blogs can be friendly cousins and neither needs to kill the other to exist. If you're making a zine in 2010 you aren't trying to communicate your ideas to the most people you can, you are making an art object for a select group of readers, which is a totally valid thing to do.

**FE:** Commenting on this same point, the web site Jezebel brought up the question of aesthetics: "the web sites that host blogs automatically lend a standardized neatness to the work that runs counter to the riot grrrl aesthetic."

**KH:** My RG [riot grrrl] aesthetic was not messy at all. I mean my zines were clearly homemade and somewhat personal, but I used white-out to get rid of paste-up lines and stuff. I thought I died and went to heaven when the Kinko's in my town got a copier that had red ink in it.

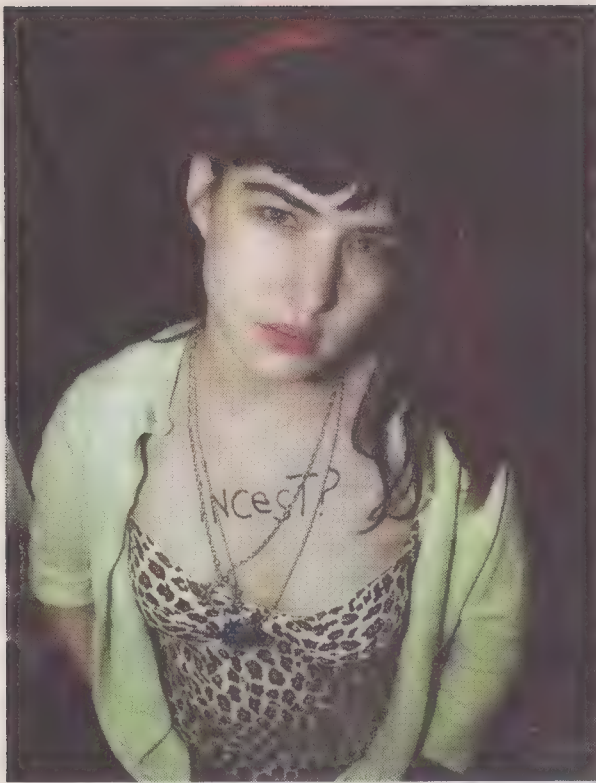
**FE:** And what about people who don't have regular, reliable access to computers, printers, and the internet?

**KH:** I think it sucks everyone isn't economically equal, but at the same time there are many public places like libraries and schools that people can and do get access to the internet. Since it takes way less time and energy to make a blog than a zine, ultimately I think blogs are way more egalitarian.



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**FE:** I can't decide if all of the YouTube responses to Le Tigre's "Deceptacon" video are a positive thing. It's great that folks are expressing themselves in response to the music that moves them and influences them and then posting it up for everyone to see how much fun they are having. But, when it's all over, they are just reacting to your stuff, using much of the same visual language of the original music video, and they are not making their own music and not making their own movies with their own wholly original vision...

**KH:** There is this one "Deceptacon" fan video where a skinny 9 year-old girl is talking on a fake cell phone in an exaggerated valley girl accent about losing "like one hundred pounds" in front of a garage door and then her friend shows up and they dance to Deceptacon on a mini-tramp. It's genius.

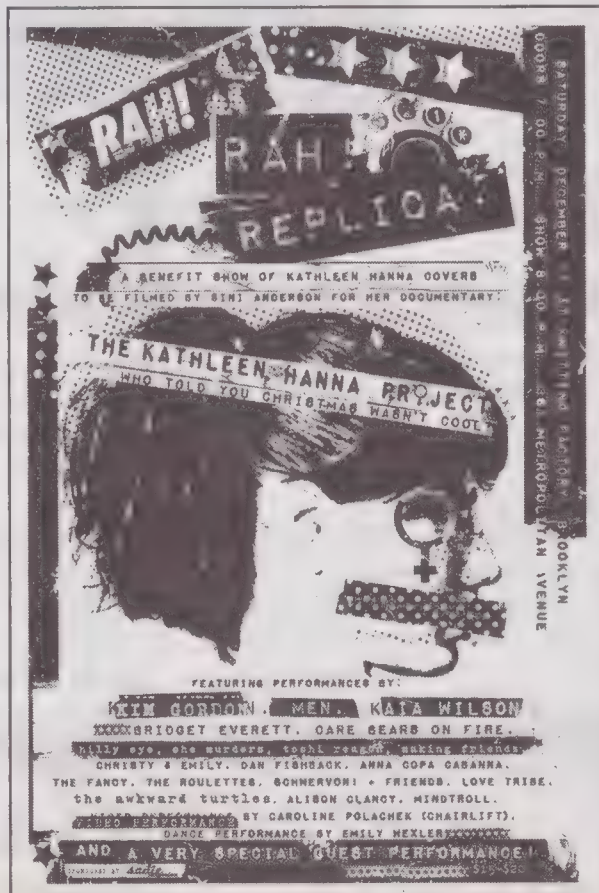
**KH:** One time I went to a record store and the dudes at the shop happened to be playing "Down by the River" by Neil Young super loud. I worked at a domestic violence shelter at the time and really, really wanted to have a nice relaxing day, so I went to the record store and as I shopped I had to listen to these lyrics played over and over: "Down by the river, I shot my woman Down by the river, I shot my woman Down by the river, I shot my

**FE:** When I was a kid, spending a Saturday afternoon at a couple record stores was always a surefire way to learn new things, read new material, meet new people, and become interested in or inspired by something that I had never heard of before. Can scenes, communities, subcultures, or movements exist on the internet? Or have scenes been replaced by "social networking" technology?

woman." Don't get me wrong, I like Neil Young, but that song made me feel pretty fucking unwelcomed. If I had the internet back then I could of just ordered the Vaselines record I wanted online and then taken a fucking bath.

I guess the upshot is that everything's a trade-off. In the end, city planners destroying downtown areas by funneling traffic towards shopping malls did more damage to human contact than the internet did.

**FE:** Another reason for my ambivalence about the relationship between digital tech and DIY is the ease with which the urgency, passion, and legitimacy of personal, grassroots expression can be counterfeited. I'm thinking, for example, of the ways in which the Tea Party claims to be an authentic grassroots "movement" when it is actually an astroturf enterprise run



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by a couple right-wing corporate-funded foundations and Republican Party bureaucrats.

**KH:** I don't think anyone with half a brain believes the Tea Party is a real thing. To me what's creepy is viral marketing in chat rooms. Like when a company pays someone to go into a teenage girl chat room and be like "OMG have you tried the new Super Teen Sports Drink, it is so good! LOL heart emoticon" I think people (especially people younger than me) are super savvy about this stuff.

**FE:** I was interested to see your call for submissions to the Bikini Kill Archive blog a while back. Has the response been what you expected?

**KH:** Yeah, it's great to hear how kids who missed us in the 90s are still relating to our music. Also they enter into it without all that crummy 90s baggage.

**FE:** I keep having this nagging feeling that no one has quite figured out how to write about the relationship between music and radical social transformation. Is this what you're trying to correct by asking women to "share a story of something weird that happened at one of our shows, your immediate reaction to a song we wrote, or how Bikini Kill changed your life..."

**KH:** Hmmmm. Weird. There's nothing on the site that asks

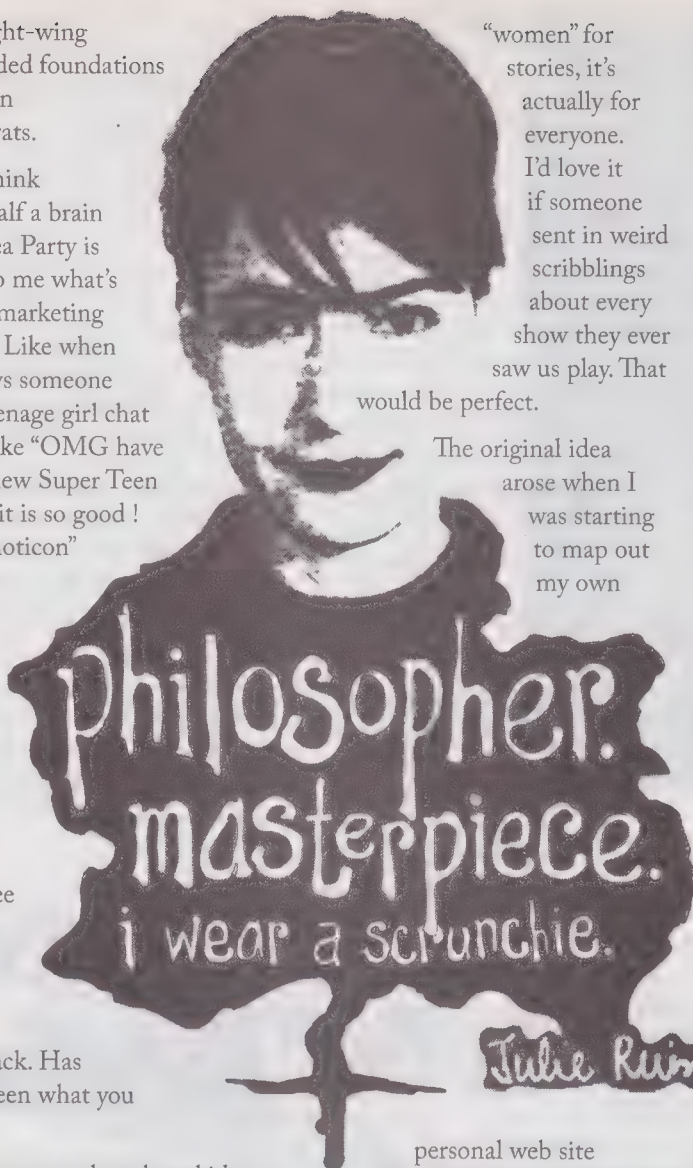
"women" for stories, it's actually for everyone. I'd love it if someone sent in weird scribbles about every show they ever saw us play. That would be perfect.

The original idea arose when I was starting to map out my own

immediacy of the DIY ethos? After all, isn't the freedom to express and create without the heavy stone of history hanging around your neck a large part of DIY's appeal?

**KH:** I wish being DIY somehow created a shield that protected me from the "heavy stone of history" as you call it, but that just isn't the case. I didn't make records and fanzines hoping no one would read them! I wanted to contribute something. DIY, in the best sense, should be about people who are usually left out of history inserting themselves into it. So, of course I want those efforts to survive.

Yes, there's a part to zine-making that can be frantic but there's also a part of it that is cold and methodical. It's like how a song may sound like it is totally falling all over the place oozing sexual abandon, but that doesn't mean everyone who ever touches the record has to barf on themselves while wearing a thong. Similarly, the project of archiving



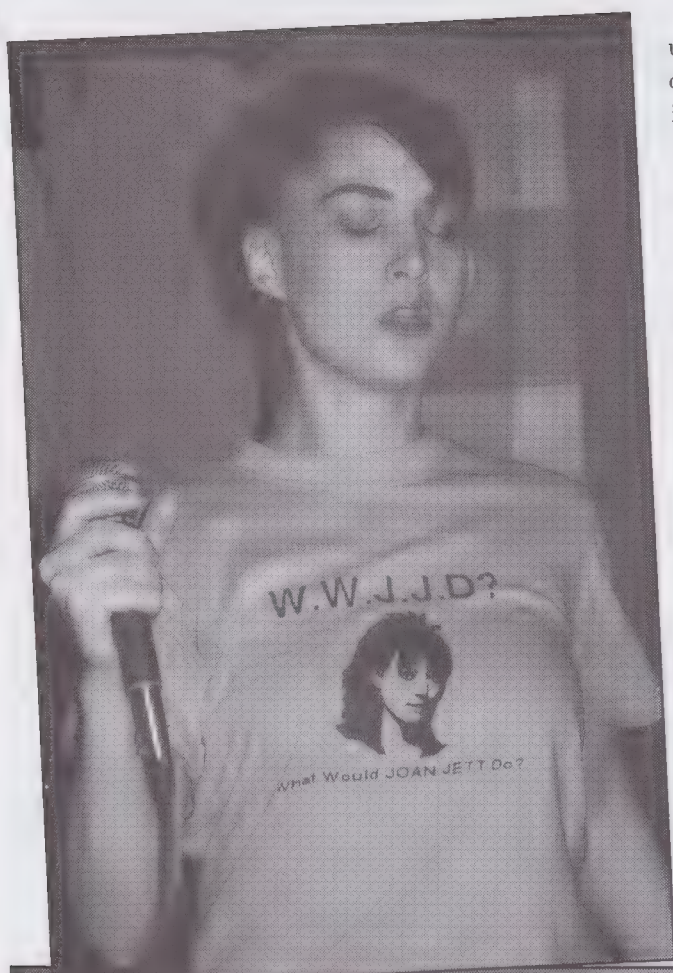
personal web site (kathleenhanna.com) and I wanted to link to the

Le Tigre web site, and realized there's not really anything for Bikini Kill. It just seemed to make more sense to let the definition arise through some sort of free for all.

**FE:** Discussing the Bikini Kill Archive blog project leads me to some questions about your January 2010 donation to NYU's Fales Library. Just as a zine is an immediate expression of a specific time and place, should we view our historic preservation of those expressions as an extension of that project? Or is history and historical archiving antithetical to the frantic







underground work is not antithetical just because the original work may be frantic and the archiving process is more methodical.

My only fear about archiving has to do with archiving something too soon and killing the works potential.

I think there's a myth that RG was like this super big deal that everyone is clamoring to help archive or something. In reality it was/is treated like a big fucking joke in many circles and we are incredibly lucky to have found an institution that, in this economy, is willing to create a vibrant radical archive for this work.

**FE:** Are you worried that locking away all this stuff in an academic library with restricted access contradicts some of the DIY principles at the heart of what you were doing from 1989 to 1996?

**KH:** At the risk of sounding defensive "locking away all this stuff in an academic library with restricted access" sounds better to me than having it deteriorating in my basement where NO ONE has access to it. Sadly, because of the internet, it really has to be like this because if it was opened up to everyone, people would just use digital cameras and put stuff on the internet which to me is kind of gross. I put stuff in the archive that is embarrassing, i.e. bad bloody underwear poetry from my Feminist

101 phase that I do not want put on the internet and decontextualized so it looks like I was writing shitty bloody underwear poetry yesterday.

**FE:** Is DIY about transformation? If so, how would you characterize this "transformation"? Is DIY culture political, apolitical, or anti-political?

**KH:** I think DIY can be transformative, but creating instead of just consuming is the tip of the iceberg. If we seize the means of production, so to speak, and just create the same bullshit, then all we are doing is creating small start-up companies that will eventually be swallowed by "the machine".

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# Trumbullplex:

## DIY anarchist living in the heart of Detroit

—by Jhon Clark

**I**n a not-so-typical area of Detroit, close to Wayne State University, slowly redefined and made more attractive for investment and middle-class living, the Trumbullplex and some of its immediate neighbors stand out. Trumbull (for short) is a 17 year-old shabby DIY anarchist living arrangement more concerned with how to be supportive of one another and less how it's seen by the broader community.

The Trumbullplex proper is two large houses in various states of disrepair and a medium-sized community/work space, called the "theatre," soon to be home to a zine library. This part of the complex is attempting to be especially organized compared to the whole because it serves many different uses.

The theatre is attached to "the big house" and helps raise money and spirits for all sorts of projects in the community. For three years it's been run by a small semi-autonomous collective composed of "x-plex," current residents, and friends. Trumbull is well suited to be home to about ten idealistic young people with other animals, and occasional guests, but the Trumbullplex community extends beyond these buildings.

With a good bit of moving in and out and a handful of longer-term residents, it's proven to be a challenging environment, especially, it seems, for parents. It's seen its share of children running about, but more often they're not staying there.

As our community tries to extend itself beyond an often tightly-woven group so we may share our space, time and other resources with many different types of people, successful events help us realize the impact we have on others and how it feels to effectively work together.

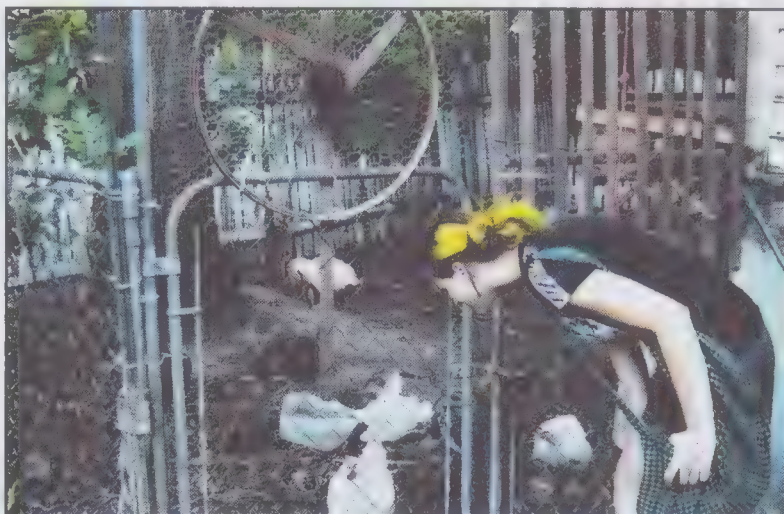
Here, the theatre and its efforts play

a key role. Each well-done event is a small victory that indicates how many hands, heads, and hearts—however flawed—can get the job done. When in doubt, this unity indicates the whole project should at least continue, regardless of whether you feel you personally can maintain your efforts there.

Trumbullplex has heart, but it's got problems not unlike Detroit's. There is a perpetual call for self-reflection

and possible reorganization, but these are sensitive issues unlikely to receive the full attention they deserve in a timely manner.

Efforts to find consensus in the particulars of how, what, where and everything in between mean we are often immersed in some level of drama. The notion you have to learn to agree to disagree is strong, and momentum for projects are often left in a state of imbalance as individuals



Chicken coop at Trumbullplex

Growing greens in the garden in back of the houses





sometimes struggle to finish it themselves or to advocate for collective attention.

Compared to the amount of hanging out that happens, this can be a source of tension. Good intentions are widely available, but to say that friends and associates don't really want to hold one another accountable all the time is an understatement.

The original mission statement was thorough and forward thinking, a good basic set of guidelines for what to do when concerns arise. For better or worse, it understandably doesn't help when it comes to day-to-day living together, so it's not really something folks rely on much these days.

The creative use of our property—owned and managed together, with no bosses but different personalities and opinions in play, all with little money (we do not solicit grants)—creates situations where you remember that it's about how people treat each other. That is also where the beauty of continuity to the past adventures in collective organizing shines the most. There have likely been over 150 residents so far since 1993 and it's still going.

No matter how old you are or how long you've been involved, if you are paying any amount of attention, it's hard not to feel a nagging, "I wonder what will happen next around here?"

Perhaps this is what ties us together, that invisible waiting for...who knows what? At times, it seems we each believe it's about the relationships, but those relationships are not the same for all and inevitably someone usually feels left out.

There is privilege and informal hierarchy and issues a-plenty, but the unavoidable political matters of who participates and how much in this or any context cannot be worked out under a planned system or single vision. It must be a fiery transformative living process for those who dare engage in it. I call it "struggle," and in fact we do struggle a lot at Trumbullplex. This must mean we are on the path to some level of social enlightenment, right?

After all, there is hope. We are not all on the same page and sometimes there's good reason to want this, but with as many different people who have lived at the Trumbullplex, it does get a little bit hard and one wonders what it would take for things to go a little smoother. It seems that new folks come from out of all sorts of weird books, so we probably never have been on the same page. But getting close counts.

Over the years, after a lot of hard work and critical thinking, I've thought it necessary we "get it together" and not risk losing what so many different people have contributed to already. I am beginning to realize, however, that is what I want, and there is no reason why one individual should get what they want no matter how dedicated they have been.

*continued on page 39*

### **Some of our accomplishments...**

10 years before the now-booming Detroit urban gardening movement, we were hard at work lending a hand and working together to reclaim land for growing community and our own food. We have a beautiful orchard, multiple gardens, chickens and bees

- we have made it a point to interact with the homeless in the area as our neighbors, also people with disabilities or mental and emotional health issues, usually through a free box (which is no easy task to keep tidy)
- we have solid and often loving relationships with our neighbors and realize through them what it means to actually be a community. We have hosted and introduced countless numbers of people from all over the world to Detroit
- the T Plex is and has been an ally to LGBTQ people.
- a third house was purchased in Southwest Detroit and failed as a woman's collective, but is now home to an x-plex family still involved in the community
- we have opened our homes up to tours and consistent (though not always well-publicized) potlucks: Food Not Bombs, Anti-Racist Action, and many radical artists have all found a home there. We have hosted weddings, dinners, memorials, the circus and sideshows, puppet troupes, and punx from Los Crudos and Chumbawumba to Defiance Ohio and The Suicide Machines
- we are very supportive of independent music in general with amazing bands performing in our theatre like Ida, Lungfish and Teeth Mountain. Poets, fashion shows, a million creative varieties of fundraisers, and a billion youth who just needed a place to go and be with others who wanted to have fun and celebrate, or commiserate, like humans need to do without having to pay an arm and a leg. we've had problems with our neighbors but raised money for them when they were in need
- we've smashed bottles and TVs and torn down walls, been arrested together, danced 'til the sun came up, and been harassed both by the police and the feds, then used the large floor space to make banners for demonstrations
- art shows galore, a sprout-growing business, and zines! can't forget about all the zines and literature distros, plus workshops, work with local promoters and tons of local bands
- we were the only DIY all-ages, cheap, trying-to-be-safe-and-cool space in Metro Detroit
- we don't do grants, so if /when you visit and its not all you expected, please cut us a little slack, at least we're still here holding down the D, and that's Das in Detroit, defiant, determined, and DIY as fuck!



# Supporting the Scene in Association with Others: Do-It-Yourselfers and Difference

## Does DIY stand inside or outside capital's economy?

—by Nicholas Jon Crane

I attended a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) event three years ago that was promoted as a “zine release show.” Ostensibly devoted to the distribution of recently published zines, the event provided zine writers with an audience of people with shared dispositions, but this essay considers a less obvious way it drew people together across difference and precipitated a politics.

My article has three parts: first, a description of the event; second, an analysis considering whether it was an instance of what some call non-capitalism; third, the argument that it exemplifies a politics of difference.

### The show

The zine release was part of a punk rock show followed by an after-party. My notes of the event are as follows:

The zine release show was hosted [by residents at a house near the university]. Attendees knew the house as a “punk house,” and their behavior indicated familiarity with the conventions of such spaces. For instance, almost everyone arrived with between three and five dollars for the bands and sought out [the residents] to make a donation even though they were not specifically asked for money. Some attendees also spent money at a long table of zines, tapes, and records, or at the “bar”—a piece of scrap wood balanced on milk crates. Signs posted on the bar and the table indicated that all proceeds would go to the touring bands.

The bands played to a crowd of 30 or 40 people who stood within arms reach of the musicians. During songs, audience members kept tempo with their hands, nodded their heads, or moved enthusiastically, jostling others with their dancing. The dancers occasionally knocked over microphone stands and cymbals,

but attentive audience members took it upon themselves to set the equipment upright. [Two attendees] snapped photos for their fanzine and blog.

When the music ended, many of the attendees went inside to eat food served on a kitchen table. [One person eating at the table] said the food had been gleaned from the dumpster behind a grocery store in a suburb north of the city. While people ate, [some attendees] drank beer around a fire they stoked with branches that the electric company had chopped from the neighborhood’s trees. I was told that, in the days before the show, [the residents] had collected those branches from the alley behind their house. The food was eaten and the fire put out sometime in the early hours of the morning. As [the residents] went to bed, the remaining few went home or stated an intention to sleep on a couch. (November 2007, Columbus, Ohio)

### The event as an instance of noncapitalism?

For anti-authoritarians critical of the hierarchies endemic to capitalist production, it is tempting to identify the zine release show as an instance of non-capitalism. Certainly some aspects of it lend themselves to being identified as such. Indeed, if one understands so-called non-capitalist economic arrangements as simply those not organized to facilitate profit-making, then the event was a site for a variety of non-capitalist practices. The house where it was hosted was a not-for-profit venue, had a kitchen stocked with food from a dumpster, and was furnished with handed-down couches on which non-renters often slept.

Further, the show’s attendees

donated money to bands and zine writers, not to a promoter or club, and therefore directly compensated creators for time spent honing their craft. Despite having no obligation to do so, attendees also voluntarily facilitated the show and wider scene of which it was a part; their unwaged work included righting toppled equipment and taking photographs that would, when printed in fanzines and posted on blogs, promote DIY events to come.

One can point to these apparently non-capitalist practices of exchange and work as evidence that the event was an already-existing alternative to capitalist social relations. Some would say that the capacity to participate in creating and sustaining non-capitalist arrangements is gained by recognizing that it is not necessary to wait for capitalism to disappear in order for them to exist.

Geographer J.K. Gibson-Graham wrote books, essays and articles that argued precisely this. Her work envisions an economic landscape of difference rather than sameness, and suggests that, when one attends to existing difference and resists a seductive assumption that we are dominated by a capitalist totality, one becomes capable of making and maintaining other worlds.

Gibson-Graham worked against an imaginary of capitalism in which it is coextensive with the developed world and necessitates the expansion for which it penetrates difference on its fragile non-capitalist frontiers. She worked to recast capitalism as a descriptor for only some economic activity, and—as if to correct past oversights—took to examining non-capitalist economies “in all their specificity and independence.” But if Gibson-Graham’s analyses convincingly showed that multiple economies coexist, they did not



promise to defend them from expropriation.

Gibson-Graham's anti-capitalocentric representations do suggest alternative economic possibilities, but they also demand accepting a binary of what's in and outside of capitalism. While capital is not given the privilege of determining all economic practices, instances of capitalism are converted to otherness in order to preserve the integrity of purported alternatives.

If capitalist and non-capitalist economies coexist in these new representations of economy, they are not only distinct but also discrete. To follow Gibson-Graham and celebrate specifically non-capitalist forms of organization is therefore to dissociate their practitioners from others and set apart the analysis of alternatives from an interrogation of the hierarchical forms of organization they presumably oppose.

So, though I share a desire that pervades Gibson-Graham's work—a desire for a politics of “here and now”—I am provoked to wonder whether the move to examine non-capitalism in isolation is sufficient or whether making workable alternatives still depends on examining what it is about existing capitalism that must be transformed.

I lean towards the latter because, by bracketing circuits of capital from analysis, one risks missing what it takes to confine their logic to a narrower (and narrower, and narrower...) sphere of social life.

## DIY events and their “outside”

DIY events can be understood differently and with consequences for envisioning possible interventions in existing economic arrangements. Representations that isolate purportedly non-capitalist DIY spaces from others may well succeed in maintaining their alterity if that is to be assessed by their apparent lack of contamination by characteristics of the so-called mainstream, but representing DIY spaces in that way risks obscuring Do-It-Yourselfers' political opportunities for negotiating how they relate to others.

On the other hand, emphasizing that Do-It-Yourselfers' identity is constitutively related to those others demands that we grapple with a politics of difference through which untidy spaces of DIY activity emerge. And emphasizing the untidiness of DIY spaces also felicitously corresponds with what happens on the ground.

Recall that on the night of the zine release show, food gleaned from the dumpster of a natural food store was served on the kitchen table. By consuming that food, Do-It-Yourselfers came to be materially entangled with and fortuitously enabled by the practices of grocery store management and employees.

Recall also that some Do-It-Yourselfers drank around a fire that was stoked by branches collected from the alley. By doing this, they were drawn into association with the neighborhood's electricity provider, who hired private professional tree-trimmers to protect the house's wiring from branches, and with the state's Public Utilities Commission, with whom the electricity provider had to coordinate the tree-trimming service.

Far from being dissociated from the everyday life of a capitalist world “outside” the event, the DIY practices in evidence at the zine release show were facilitated by Do-It-Yourselfers' relationships with particular institutions and the circuits of capital by which they were maintained.

There is something to be celebrated however, even if it is not unadulterated autonomy. Do-It-Yourselfers' efforts to glean waste left behind by

institutions through which capital unmistakably flows does show they are actively negotiating the terms of their entanglement with the forms of organization those institutions embody.

Perhaps making this visible will compel people not yet participating in DIY activity to pursue such alternatives to profit-making economic arrangements. In the meantime, some acknowledgement that DIY alternatives only exist in association with circuits of capital is central to the construction of a future in which Do-It-Yourselfers are regarded as properly political and more than just a tribe of naïve individualists (or lifestylists) who fleetingly evade, but must eventually capitulate to wage labor.



diy  
do it yourself



# New World From Below: Anarchists & Antiauthoritarians at the USSF

—by Sarah Coffey

**D**etroit—Some see a battered, blighted city here. Others see fertile ground for alternatives to capitalism and state structures by building our/their own infrastructures and networks as natural responses to a broken system.

Against this backdrop came the 2010 U.S. Social Forum (USSF), a self-described “movement building process,” that brought 15,000 non-party leftists and people from community projects to Detroit between June 22–26. But, among the throng that held a huge march on Woodward Ave., the city’s main street, attended workshops in the downtown convention center, and presented numerous cultural events, the North American anarchist movement also had a strong presence.

Discussion started scant months before the Forum about organizing an autonomous space on the model of the Alternative Social Forum that Venezuela’s El Libertario group and other Latin American anarchists and anti-authoritarians organized during the 2006 Caracas, World Social Forum (WSF).

They created an open networking space parallel to the WSF for autonomous social movements to debate movement agendas, “not those imposed from the top.” The Caracas organizers critiqued the WSF as having become a bureaucratic spectacle and platform for leftist governments and big NGOs, the Venezuelan government’s hyper-exploitation of natural resources, and the resulting impact on indigenous communities.

In Detroit, the New World From

Below organizing collective (as we came to call ourselves) was a collaboration locally of Solidarity and Defense, (unofficially) Food Not Bombs, ronin locals, and was supported by the Trumbullplex Theater Collective. National collaboration came from City From Below, the Institute for Anarchist Studies, Manifesta Musician’s Collective, Team Colors Collective, Midnight Special Law Collective, AK Press, and Red Emma’s.

We recognized the value of an autonomous space outside of the convention centers and corporate chain hotels of the Detroit Forum. The political and racial differences between Venezuela and the U.S., coupled with the importance of a large people of color-led process within this country, the political moment, and the fact that this was only the second U.S. Social Forum, led us to work both inside and outside the official program.

A track of over 35 anarchist



workshops occurred during the daytime inside the Forum and in the evenings a convergence space at a local church was opened with food, events and discussion groups.

We printed 7,500 broadsheets (available at [anarchistussf.wordpress.com](http://anarchistussf.wordpress.com)) detailing the anarchist workshop track and alternative events that were distributed both inside the Forum venues and at the convergence space. FNB and the IWW Solidarity Kitchen served possibly the only free meals provided during the USSF in the church basement using its kitchen and dining room. With the support of FNBer’s from all over the country and donations from diners grateful





for the quality vegetarian meals, upwards of 600 people a day were fed. As capitalism crumbles, we have the opportunity, if not the responsibility, to develop fresh ways of thinking and new models for relating to each other and the world. The resurgence of powerful social movements in North America seem possible and anarchists and anti-authoritarians have much to contribute.

### Some successes included:

- \* Our workshops, broadsheet, and convergence space introduced thousands to the ideas and practice of a visionary, organized anarchism.
- \* Many people who weren't anarchists came to the workshops, building connections and relationships as they did at the convergence space, especially over meals and the SFA benefit.
- \* Beyond finding and meeting each other, it allowed anarchists interested in coalition work, building a social movement, developing a community and organizationally minded anarchists

that do political work to find each other and begin strategizing in a relaxed setting, outside protests and repression.

- \* Encouraged more anarchists to attend and interact with the USSF than if there hadn't been a visible anarchist presence.
- \* Creating a different type of convergence space where we focused on creating a friendly, inviting, inclusive, and warm atmosphere including a welcoming tent.
- \* Laying the groundwork for (hopefully) a continental anarchist convergence next summer to do strategy work for a few days or a week.

### Some of our challenges were:

- \* Starting late on organizing, and thus not getting more things done in advance and/or doing more during the USSF.
- \* Not thinking through the

hectic and overwhelming character of the USSF, and what that would mean for our own on-the-ground ability to fulfill everything we wanted to do.

- \* Not using our workshops in the USSF to structure more participation among USSF grassroots organizers, us and others.
- \* Creating effective discussions around the relationship of white organizers/organizations to a process that seeks to cultivate people of color leadership.

*Sarah Coffey was a co-organizer of the Anarchist Convergence*



## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Montreal Anarchist Bookfair

**May 21 and 22 • No gods, no masters, no bosses, no borders**

The 12th annual Montreal Anarchist Bookfair, which takes place during Montreal's month long Festival of Anarchy, will be held on May 21 and 22, 10am-5pm at the CEDA, 2515 rue Delisle, (a short walk from Lionel-Groulx metro).

The bookfair is one of North America's largest, and features publishers, distributors, and book sellers from across the continent and Europe. There is a zine room, films, art exhibits, and introductory as well as in-depth workshops, some in French and others in English. The *Fifth Estate* will be present with its latest edition.

The event's web-site, [anarchistbookfair.ca](http://anarchistbookfair.ca), states, "The Bookfair is for people who don't necessarily consider themselves anarchists, but are curious about anarchism, as well as a space for anarchists to meet, network, and share in a spirit of respect and solidarity." The Bookfair is organized in a spirit of openness towards the different traditions, visions, and practices of anarchism.

"Together we share a commitment to promoting anarchism through the values of mutual aid, grassroots

democracy, direct action, autonomy, and solidarity, while opposing oppression in all its forms. The Montreal Anarchist Bookfair—and month-long Festival of Anarchy—bring together anarchist ideas and practice, through words, images, music, theatre and day-to-day struggles for justice, dignity and collective liberation."

The Festival of Anarchy begins with a traditional May Day march, an important event in Montreal. Different groups and individuals organize events during the Festival of Anarchy including a poetry reading, films, and discussions. For example, the anarchist bookstore in Montreal, L'Insoumise, is sponsoring Penelope Rosemont of the Chicago Surrealist Group and Kerr Publishers.

The Bookfair's motto is "No gods, no masters, no bosses, no borders."

**The Sixth Montreal International Anarchist Theatre Festival is May 17-18. See [anarchisttheatrefestival.com](http://anarchisttheatrefestival.com) for a listing of performances.**



# Return to Self-Reliance

—by Patrick Dunn

**I**n *Self-Reliance* Emerson tells us that our alienation consists of living in a world that does not manifest our genius. We trust only in society and do not trust in fate. Society is built on a secondary selfhood that has its limits in the order of calculation. Its founding principles are conformity and consistency. Its relations are governed by envy, property, and debt. In society we are “ashamed before the blade of grass and the blowing rose.” We practice a false morality, as if in apology for our existence. Our original powers are sacrificed at the altar of a ghostly civilization.

A total revolution is announced in the concept of self-reliance, which is an automatic trust in fate. The fatal self is the aboriginal self, beyond the narrow personhood of name and custom. It is the unknowable self of instinct and spontaneity, the primordial self of god, daimon, and genius. The empowerment of this self is everywhere lost in society, its cosmic force projected into idolatrous symbols. A life sustained at the fountain of self-reliance is a life of absolute nobility and affirmation. To drink from this fountain is to trust innocently in the necessity of one's path, without time for judgment or explanation.

The liberty of self-reliance is simple, wild, and immediate. It springs from the assurance that whatever one is, in one's most original nature, is just. This is a justice inherent in the forces of nature itself. Opposed to it stands the moral order of civilization, which institutes an enslavement of these aboriginal forces. Morality is the discipline of the pale, reactive subject, who counts and is accounted. Its techniques are inseparable from the spectacular order of knowledge and mediation. The moral act is performed for the sake of being known, judged, surveyed; it establishes all life in relation to a universal scale of credit and debt, crime and punishment. The rudiments of the whole bloody machinery of mass society are contained in this subjection.

“Self-reliance” is Emerson's name for an

inalienable power native to the Earth's creatures. Its fulfillment implies not only an inward spiritual orientation, but an outward revolt against the

The automatic trust of self-reliance exceeds all investment in word, number, and purposive activity. Its ultimate manifestation is a condition of effortless



institutions of civilization. We inherit this power from our prehistoric ancestors as the essential ground of our constitution. And yet self-reliance remains a hidden potential in a world defined by its systematic denial.

In a global “information society” with its logic of total surveillance and technocratic control, this aboriginal condition is even more difficult to sustain. One is forced to live as a part-time savage, recuperating the powers of self-reliance through transitory religious or “transpersonal” experiences. Or else one strives for a merely inward realization, a primitive soul participating in the rituals of postmodern hyper-reality. This is a false refuge, and no more than a private memorial to the powers of the unknowable self. Self-reliance has always been rooted in the reawakening of a perennial exodus from the self-imposed tortures of civilization. Its return as an authentic way of life will be possible only when these tortures have been overcome.

spontaneity — doing nothing, at least nothing knowable as action. This is not a state of passivity or inertia, but an experience so alive with energy as to overflow all attributions of order. In its extreme form, this automatic trust means trusting in wild nature for survival, without any need for exploitative or classificatory labor. Radical self-reliance stands in resistance to the division of labor; it evades the civilized obligation to appear. It is rooted in a refusal of the separation of consciousness into subject and object, an outliving of the transcendent violence of signification.

Emerson is explicit in bringing this radical vision to bear on the servile conventions of mass society. Indeed—and in contrast to the domesticated appropriations that have circulated for the past two centuries—his entire essay on self-reliance can be read as a fierce statement of contempt for modern civilization. The harm of “improved machinery,” Emerson warns, “may compensate its good.” The myth of





Progress he casually rejects. Technology and industrial labor are incisively diagnosed, exposing an inner logic of stultification and disempowerment. ("Society acquires new arts, and loses old instincts.") Family relations, social norms, representative government, duties to God and Country, educational training, scientific and charitable organizations, specialized modes of livelihood—all are found wanting. Property is singled out as a particularly abominable enemy of self-reliance, a foundation of envy and attachment on which much of society's impoverishment is based.

Underlying this critique is the positive vision of independence illuminated by Emerson's metaphysics of the aboriginal self. The essence of this vision is both an injunction to drop out of the spectacle of modern society and a call to live from the depths of one's trust in fate. A sudden, solitary reversion to pure wildness is neither possible nor desirable. As a harmonious resonance in nature, self-reliance is not a condition that can be achieved alone. On a planet thoroughly colonized by self-destructive forces, self-reliance is cultivated through the formation of small-scale autonomous communities. These are zones of intimate co-existence where basic potentialities of life and dignity can be sustained during the process of civilization's dissolution.

To a large extent, these communities are able to survive on the wasted

abundance of the crumbling order, without employing new techniques of organized labor and domestication. In this way, essential needs—which are potentially very few—can be satisfied directly, without sacrificing the godlike respect and equanimity inspired by the path of self-reliance. Undoubtedly, trusting in one's aboriginal self means disengaging from the machinery of technocratic society, refusing to invest one's faith in experts, specialists, and authorities, except where imminent needs are in question.

Trusting innocently in fate demands an acceptance of what is immediately in play. This is not a formula for reconciliation with the existing totality, but an invitation to open revolt. The established order does not manifest our destiny; it is not the outcome of innocent trust, but of denial, separation, and rational control. Innocence ends with the obligation to become a responsible member of society, to establish oneself as a rational, consenting adult. To trust in fate one must withdraw, as far as possible, from the ranks of the grown-up order and live childlike.

Emerson's way of putting this is as follows: "I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is for itself and not for a spectacle." To live spontaneously, directly, and not in the shadow of some mediating totality, is to make life from the powers nearest oneself, the powers of auto-trust. And to make

this life in perfect innocence is to overstep the boundaries and taboos that govern the reified order of society. If one builds one's own hearth, gathers one's own grains, or bakes one's own bread – or does all three in defiance of specialization – then one is closing in on the immediate powers of genius. And if one does all this innocently, then one may very well inflict violence on Law, Property, and Custom in the doing.

It is at this level that the positive force of self-reliance reveals an infinite capacity to disrupt the operations of the civilized mono-program. In living freely, in entrusting oneself to the unknown, one disobeys law and order simply by one's very nature. Self-reliance, in the midst of civilized society, is a perpetual

**We travel the path  
of the free spirit,  
who is ashamed of  
nothing and who  
makes himself at  
home everywhere—  
and who might say  
to his brothers and  
sisters, "You and I,  
we are like the rest,  
we own everything."**

trespass. Merely by walking naked one breaks the law. And there is no trust where nature hides from itself.

Let us not affirm these dreams only in our minds! By practicing intimate co-existence, we concentrate the sphere of our attractions to what we experience immediately, to what is most primordially our own. We gather our forces and relations closer and closer until the dream of original harmony again comes alive. We travel the path of the free spirit, who is ashamed of nothing and who makes himself at home everywhere—and who might say to his brothers and sisters, "You and I, we are like the rest, we own everything."



## book review

by David Tighe

*Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader* by Gustav Landauer, edited and translated by Gabriel Kuhn, PM Press, 2010.

**G**ustav Landauer is perhaps the most important German speaking anarchist of the late 19th and early 20th century, but he is not well known in the English speaking world. Despite four book length studies of Landauer and a few translations, there has never been a major collection of his work in English. Gabriel Kuhn and PM Press have changed that.

*Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader* is a very good introduction to Landauer's work for the English speaking world. It contains one of Landauer's most important pieces, *Revolution*, twenty-nine other shorter essays, and a selection of correspondence. There is also a solid introduction and bibliography.

The focus here is on Landauer's political writings, although he wrote voluminously on many topics, especially philosophy and literature. This focus is well-considered because reading the entire book gives you a sense of Landauer's ideas about anarchy, socialism, and revolution that are not always straightforward and obvious. Landauer was deeply influenced by Christian mysticism, especially the work of 12th century German, Meister Eckhart; he even translated some of Eckhart's writings into modern German. For some, the mystical elements of Landauer's writings may make them difficult or unappealing, but I find that this search for an anarchist and non-religious mysticism is one of the most interesting and unique aspects of his work.

The essays are arranged roughly chronologically, which is a good way to follow Landauer's political progression. From his early essays published in *Die Socialist*, which he edited from 1893-99, you get a picture of the fiery young radical who was described in a German police file (in 1893) as "the most important agitator of the radical revolutionary movement." By the time we read his critique of propaganda of the deed and political assassination (*Anarchic Thoughts on Anarchism*, published in 1901), we see a much more philosophical and mystical writer, as

seen in the essay *Through Separation to Community*. At times in the essay he struggles with perception and time. He speaks of stopping the process of time to see past, present and future simultaneously. Later, he proposes a mystical unity of individualism and community: "the true individuality that we find in the deepest depths of ourselves is community, humanity, divinity."

The period of 1900-08 saw Landauer mostly withdrawn from radical politics. He wrote extensively, translated a number of books, including works by Kropotkin, Meister Eckhart, George Bernard Shaw, and with Hedwig Lachmann—three works by Oscar Wilde. He also wrote two of his three most important works: *Skepticism and Mysticism* in 1903 and *Revolution* in 1907. Definitely a productive period!

*Revolution* is easily the book's most difficult work. Gabriel Kuhn acknowledges this in the introduction: "Landauer's inconsistent use of the term 'revolution,' for example, has confused many readers. In general, Landauer presents 'revolution' as a permanent historical struggle for socialism, tied into the renewal of spirit, individuality, and community (in Landauer's mysticism, all one). This philosophical interpretation of revolution is the crux of the book. At the same time, Landauer also employs the term in a much more common manner and refers to individual events of—actual or attempted—radical social transformation as 'revolutions.' Kuhn also underlines the importance of this essay, calling it "one of the most important anarchist analyses of history and revolution."

I concur with both assessments. This is a strange and wonderful essay. It is beyond the scope of this review to discuss *Revolution* in detail, but it needs discussion. Despite any flaws, this is an important essay and unlike anything I've read. Landauer's interesting and influential ideas about utopia are expanded herein. He also expounds at length his ideas about the Christian Middle Ages. He praises alchemists,

pantheists, and heretics. Landauer ends the essay by stating that we hardly know anything about the future and that the path we take "will lead via the unknown, with sudden turns, and towards buried treasure." This essay had been a buried treasure, but now it is revealed by a skillful translator.

Shortly after writing *Revolution*, Landauer seemingly reengaged with radical politics. What follows in the book is a large number of shorter essays on a wide number of topics: how to create socialism, the Social Democratic Party, anti-militarism and struggle against WWI, the Haymarket martyrs, Benjamin Tucker, May Day, the Mexican Revolution, Esperanto (entitled: *Do Not Learn Esperanto!*), autonomous rural communities, and so on.

The few letters included are also of great interest—they definitely paint a picture of Landauer as a complex man. Erich Mühsam, Landauer's life-long friend, is quoted: "Shall I speak of Landauer, the man? Of the way he moved, of his personal relationships with others? Read his letters! Read them!" The one letter included to Mühsam is harshly critical of his writing. The letters also reveal a personal side not seen in his writings, including a series of short telegrams to his daughters in the waning days of the Bavarian Council Republic, shortly before he was murdered on May 2, 1919.

Gabriel Kuhn has done us a favor by translating this book. The translations are excellent and the book is laid out well and easy to use. The introduction gives a lot of useful biographical information as well as an interesting discussion of Landauer's legacy, including his influence on the kibbutz movement in the 1920s and '30s. Here's hoping this book leads to a revival of interest in Gustav Landauer and to more translations.



## music review

by Ron Sakolsky

*How Art and Music Can Change the World: Mecca Normal*

Over the last 25 years, Mecca Normal has consistently turned up the heat on the theoretical relationship between music and social change by furiously stirring them together in the fiery cauldron of artistic practice. In the process, they have boldly created a unique body of work that has challenged the downpressing gravity of the authoritarian life with a yeasty combination of outrage and subversive laughter. In essence, they have defied gravity, and, in doing so, have urged us all to refuse to be held down when we could be soaring to the outer reaches of possibility, or, better yet, demanding the impossible. Their music is not designed to present us with a dry polemic on the "one-best-way" to be politically active or offer a pat answer on how to live our lives according to anybody's party line. Instead, it is a direct call to see through the bullshit and make our own choices.

Historically-speaking, the house of Mecca Normal that Jean and David have built has been widely acknowledged as one part of the foundation of the Riot Grrrl movement which burst on the punk scene in the Nineties throwing down the gauntlet to male supremacy and laying the groundwork for Ladyfest solidarity. Before that, Mecca Normal was the spark that lit up the radical political landscape of the late Eighties with the Black Wedge tour. That tour was an anarchist antidote to the self-congratulatory left/liberal Red Wedge tour in the UK, which aimed at unseating Boss Margaret Thatcher, but ultimately led to the reign of Boss Tony Blair, who became the staunch

Labour Party ally of Boss George Bush in the "war on terror." Black Wedge, on the other hand, placed its rebellious emphasis on a politically-engaged music and poetry that wanted nothing to do with the electoral realm and focused instead on denouncing systemic abuse and countering the spectacular politics of everyday life.

Many recording artists naively, or perhaps conveniently, believe that music can only be used to change the world by trading on their own status as stars who are recruited to support the least obnoxious political candidate or who involve themselves in do-gooder charitable activities that condescendingly distance them from those that society attempts to victimize. Mecca Normal has never played such shallow celebrity games. Instead, the name of their previous record label, Kill Rock Stars, says it all. As Jean Smith once explained in an article she wrote about Black Wedge for the 1995 anthology that I co-edited with Fred Ho, *Sounding Off!: Music as Subversion/Resistance/Revolution*, "The Black Wedge functions/agitates in the crawlspace of resistance, under the big house of capitalism."

And that original Black Wedge tour has provided a seminal source of experiences and ideas that have animated Mecca Normal's music, writing and visual art ever since. Their most recent 2009 tour, whose overriding theme was "How Art and Music Can Change the World," is a case in point. More



Mecca Norma is Jean Smith and David Lester—making music and art together since 1984

than a mere retrospective of their work, the tour opener that I caught at the Vinegar Factory in Vancouver was a reaffirmation of their inspirational power and continuous resilience. Both Mecca Normal tours represent plateaus in relation to their ongoing commitment to cultural activism. Yet, the latter, by combining a seasoned performance-based pedagogy with a raw emotional and lyrical intensity, is the culmination (so far) of the rock solid artistic integrity that has made Mecca Normal into an underground legend in its own time.



famous T-Shirt design by David Lester of Mecca Normal





## book review

by Walker Lane

***The Vegetarian Myth: Food, Justice and Sustainability,***  
Lierre Keith, 320 pp, PM Press, 2009, \$20

***Vegan Freak: Being Vegan in a Non-Vegan World***

Revised edition, expanded & update, Bob Torres and Jenna Torres, 222 pp, PM Press, 2010, \$14.95

Once, at a Tai Chi workshop I attended, an elderly Chinese master of the discipline suddenly stopped in the middle of the demonstration and asked, completely out of the blue, “Why do so many of you not eat meat?”

Since there were quite a few vegetarians among the eager students, the only response was an embarrassing silence and the soft shuffling of cotton-soled Tai Chi shoes.

“There’s good ch’i in meat,” he admonished us in his accented English, referring to the energy flow present in all living things that would enhance us by ingesting that of another being.

Someone, anticipating that the answer wasn’t going to be well received, said weakly, “We don’t want to kill to eat.” “Why not?,” asked the master. “Everything eats everything. One day worms eat us,” he said and roared with laughter at his own comment. Weak smiles came from the assembled students who were thankful that the discussion went quickly back to the training at hand.

This is essentially Lierre Keith’s argument in *The Vegetarian Myth*—everything eats everything. She views existence as a tightly interconnected circle of life and death encompassing all living beings and the earth itself, and attempts to avoid or circumvent the process only brings the environmental, political, and health disasters she chronicles in her highly charged style.

The myth, referred to in the book’s title, is one held by so many of us, that a non-meat diet can save the animals and the planet, and that a vegetable-based diet is essential for good health. Keith, a vegan for 20 years, denies each of these contentions with a fervor consistent with the manner of all apostates. Her book marshals an enormous amount of

supportive evidence from social and medical sciences, and adds her own meatless history which she says almost destroyed her body.

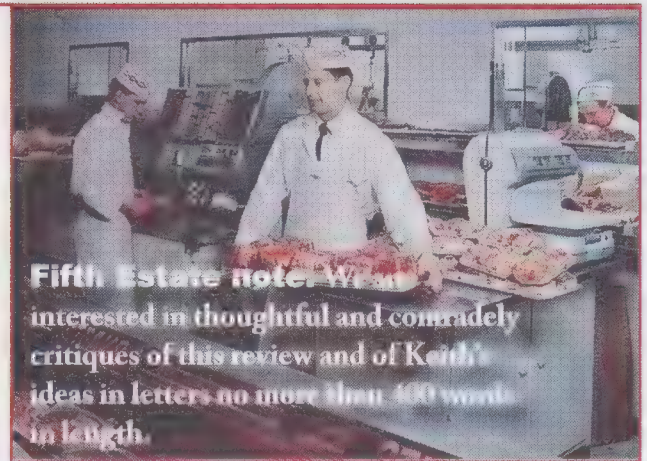
Keith, now a vigorous flesh-eater, advocates a return to meat-eating as a way to heal ourselves and the planet, although she’s sketchy on the details of what this would mean. She certainly doesn’t advocate eating at MacDonald’s.

You might think that an author who identifies herself as a radical feminist activist and who exhibits a driving concern for the damage being done to the environment would get a respectful hearing since her charges are so provocative and challenging not only to vegans and vegetarians, but to mainstream nutrition theories as well.

Instead, she and her book have touched off a firestorm of condemnation, denunciation, calumny, insults, and charges of bad faith against her. Her critics exhibit a fury in many on-line discussions of the book, calling her every name imaginable: a liar, a shill for the meat industry, an “animal holocaust denier,” and a publicity hound, all of which culminated in a physical attack on her while she spoke at the March 2010 San Francisco Anarchist Book Fair.

Three men in masks and black hoodies ran up to her as she spoke and slammed a cayenne-laced pie into Keith’s face, yelling, “Go Vegan.” Several days later, she reported, “My eyes are still puffy and blurry, but the pain is definitely better. I think the worst part was hearing people cheer my assailants while I was being assaulted. I don’t want to live in a world where people cheer while someone has cayenne rubbed into their eyes.”

That act, the equivalent of macing



someone, at an anarchist event should be condemned as cowardly and completely unacceptable, but instead has been defended by some. Like anti-abortion terrorists, self-righteousness excuses violence. Most vegans, I’m sure find this act as reprehensible as any meat eater would.

By the way, there are numerous books in print that make the same nutritional assertions and criticism of vegans as hers, but perhaps the fact that it was an anarchist event spurred the assault.

The North American Animal Liberation Press Office released a statement praising the assailants who “made their statement very eloquently and succinctly on behalf of the billions of animals she advocates killing.” Keith makes it clear that she opposes all factory farming and advocates restoration of forest and prairies in her book.

However, she must be aware, as our imprisoned vegan friend and comrade, Marie Mason—a harsh critic of Keith—that cattle grazing has destroyed many of the prairies the author wants to re-establishment.

I haven’t eaten land animals in decades and most of my diet consists of grains, legumes, and vegetables, with some additional seafood and dairy products. My health is excellent. So is that of my veggie and vegan friends as well as that of the many famous people such as k.d. Lang, Moby, Morrissey, Rep. Dennis Kucinich, the late Coretta Scott King and Cesar Chavez, numerous professional sports stars including triathletes, body builders, and professional basketball players and baseball players, who adhere to a



vegan diet. Yet, Keith says her vegan diet badly injured her body including causing a spinal deformation from which she'll never recover. She cites anecdotal evidence and studies demonstrating how the body cannot be sustained without ingesting animal fats and protein.

Many critics of her book (and, there are many!) take on her advocacy of meat consumption although much of the on-line rage stems from charges that her book incites "the murder of innocent non-human beings." To support her nutritional claims, Keith cites endless and seemingly legitimate medical studies affirming her carnivore point of view, many which confound current dietary recommendations including those published by the U.S. government, all which advise limiting meat consumption.

Contrary to what highly respected, independent groups like the Center for Science in the Public Interest advocate, Keith says that a heavy grain-based diet is the cause of what she identifies as the "diseases of civilization"—cancer, heart ailments, and other plagues of our era. Causal factors for disease and the impact of diet on health aren't as easy to discern as one would think. Am I healthy because of my diet and active lifestyle, or, because I'm a North American, white, middle-class man? How we live and what we eat greatly effect our health, but so does where we are situated in the class pyramid which often has determinative consequences.

Keith says she greatly respects the desire of non-meat eaters to live without killing, but asks them to look at the damage done by agriculture which she refers to (irrefutably, I'd say) as "bio-cide." The planet-wide swath of agricultural land with its mono-crop planting is really what has killed "billion of animals" that the pie-throwers say they care about.

Keith asks us to look at a piece of land with its thousands of inhabitants, not just its mega-fauna, and see the destruction and death necessary to raise corn for tortillas, wheat for pasta, or rice for biryani. Farming, especially the modern variety with its dependence on fossil fuel eliminates all vegetable and animal life other than the desired crop. When you eat vegetables, it too

is on a mountain of corpses, big and small, when one counts the species that have been driven from the land for cultivation including the tiniest of living beings that are eradicated.

So, to eat grains, no less than meat, is to kill. Meat is murder? So is wheat. But, if you substitute the natural process of death for the loaded word, murder, a much different set of ethical standards arise. Keith, like this publication whose critique of agriculture began many years ago, realizes that systems of production have social consequences as well as environmental ones. The historical record is there. The accumulation of the surplus large scale agriculture could produce was the first capital although shortsighted Marxists claim the system of capitalism itself didn't arise until thousands of years later.

With wealth that could be hoarded, a system of rulers established itself (the State), protected by armed men, created a division of labor, destroyed the matriarchy and implanted angry sky gods who ruled as men did on earth, grouped people into the squalor of cities, and began a relentless drive to conquer with its planetary system.

Annual grain production also allowed a population expansion as more people could be fed, and as the number of people grew, so did the need for more land to be brought under cultivation, which produced more grain, which allowed for more people to be fed, which...

What emerges ultimately from her text is catastrophism, the long neglected Deep Ecology concept of Overshoot; the view that we've gone so far beyond the planet's resources, used up so much of what it could provide to a species in balance with nature, that we are headed for a planetary collapse. Keith, as well as this publication, Deep Ecologists, and even many mainstream observers, state frighteningly that the march of agriculture has brought us to an untenable point as a species. We've overshot our carrying capacity with the destruction of forests, watersheds, seas, and the rapid disappearance of top soil and now exist by drawing down on what's left.

This seems a much more potent question for the pie-throwers to confront rather than whether a human

can exist on vegetables alone. If we're on a bullet train speeding along at 250 miles an hour with a washed-out trestle ahead, does it really matter what's on our plate in the dining car?

Nutritionists can argue forever about the claims and counter-claims about diet. That discussion is crucial to our individual health, but what do Keith's critics say to her central theses? Do those who want to live without killing deny that agriculture, which provides 80 percent of the world's diet, is murderous (in their terms) little different than the death created by meat eating? Keith states, the "foods the vegetarians say will save us are foods that destroy the world." Doesn't this necessitate conversation and debate rather than denunciation and violence?

Do Keith's critics deny that agriculture allowed the first rulers to arise and with them the State, patriarchy, and repressive religions? Or, that with the advent of agriculture, human *and* animal life became disvalued, and abstraction replaced real experience?

But, even if we agree with her, where does that leave the vegan, vegetarians, and others like myself who eat a reduced animal diet? Maddeningly, Keith gives barely a hint. She certainly doesn't provide recipes; doesn't even suggest what proportion of meat properly belongs in a diet (although she offers the Innuits whose 80 percent meat and fat diet doesn't result in heart disease or cancer).

She says diet ought to be appropriate to where you live. Keith says the damage the planetary population will experience is unavoidable given the number of people on earth. She says the question is, are people going to attempt to manage what is unavoidable or will the blindly wielded scythe of Nature, neither cruel nor compassionate, do it for us?

**Postscript:** I almost forgot the other title under consideration, *Vegan Freak*. Its vapid, chatty text advocating a diet without animal products is seemingly aimed at making late teens gag at the thought of eating even dairy products (Did you know that all cheese "contains at least some pus?" Ew, gross!) The book almost made me go out and eat a burger.



## book review

by David Widginton

### *Islands of Resistance: Pirate Radio in Canada*

by Andrea Langlois, Ron Sakolsky and Marian van der Zon,  
New Star Books, 2010

**A**fter reading *Islands of Resistance: Pirate Radio in Canada*, all I wanted to do was become a pirate. Not the kind that steals in a capitalist bent to become rich at the expense of others. I want to appropriate what is already mine: the public airways and broadcast what corporate media despise most—defiant free-form radio that encourages audio creativity and promotes social justice.

The 246-page anthology, edited by Andrea Langlois, Ron Sakolsky and Marian van der Zon, is a collection of 16 essays and a docudrama in seven acts that explain why pirate radio is important in a digital age, with examples of where it practices across Canada

Topics here on resisting regulation, radio and anarchy, indigenous voices, protest tactics, temporary autonomous radio, radio art, gender politics and more are all discussed in detail throughout the book with a defiant flare; I was moved to use my favorite open-source torrent software to find myself a copy the 2009 film, *Pirate Radio*, a feature-length fiction about an offshore pirate radio station, based on such dissenting luminaries as Radio Caroline, Radio Luxembourg, Radio Atlanta and many others.

The editors chose to embrace the term 'pirate' even though its pejorative ring may associate it with theft and mayhem or with swashbuckling Hollywood imagery. As stipulated in their introduction, they like it because it inspires "both the radical imagination and the practice of direct action." But not all the contributors seem to agree. Neskia Manuel's modest contribution to the book with Secwepemc Radio didn't need an abundance of words to express the role of their broadcasts, which are not necessarily pirate in nature as he so eloquently outlined: "Our position is that as aboriginal people we did not give up our right to make use of the electromagnetic spectrum to carry out our traditions, language and culture... It is the modern version of the campfire where people would share stories." He

continues later in his essay with what may be the most radical and empowering statement of the entire book, "We are not pirates, we are Secwepemc."

Broadcasters don't need to be on a ship to be pirates. They can broadcast their voices from the forest as they do in Barrier Lake, "one of the poorest native communities in Canada." This indigenous community is located just five hours northwest of Montreal and is today "perhaps the southernmost example of a traditional, sub-Arctic hunting society in Canada" where the youth still speak the Algonquin language. Traditions and their native language are threatened by the lack of schools on the reserve, forcing kids to towns like Val-D'Or and Maniwaki more than 150 kilometers away.

The 'Voice of the Forest' broadcasts are listened by community youth as well as the elders. One anecdote that emphasizes community in the radio project describes an elder woman that drives up to the radio station to tell the DJ, "No more Rap! Put on some country—we want to dance!" A lot of people, including elders, were at someone's house listening to the radio. The DJ responded by putting on a large selection of country tunes, set the playlist on repeat with some premixed station IDs mixed in, locked the door to the station and headed out to a friend's where a slice of the community were also listening to the same music. Developing a listenership is not easy, but in Barrier Lake, the community was listening.

Setting up radio broadcasting capabilities like they did in Barrier Lake will have long term benefits for the community but pirate radio is also useful for the short term as a protest tactic. The chapter, Amplifying Resistance, discusses the role of low-watt broadcasting during protests to offer protesters information



about the meanderings of a snake march, the movement of police, and of arrests. Another important use is the possibility of using the broadcasts to inform the adjacent community of the protest's underlying issues. By promoting the location on the FM dial to residents along a protest route, they can be encouraged to tune in and listen to a live broadcast.

I remember Free Radio Tent City that authors Andrea Langlois and Gretchen King write about. It was a low-watt broadcast during the July 3, 2003 occupation of a Montreal park to protest the lack of affordable housing during a housing crisis that found hundreds of people homeless. Protesters were encouraged to bring their own radios to the protest and tune into 104.9 on the FM dial. The broadcast unified the squatters by tuning all in to a collective voice where listeners were encouraged to join the conversation.

These few examples give a glimpse of how pirate radio is being used and practiced across Canada. The book's editors note that pirate radio projects are not necessarily easy to document by the 'illegal' nature of their broadcasts and their efforts to remain clandestine. Others did not wish to be referred to in the book for fear of government reprisal. I am glad *Islands of Resistance* is filled with gaps of information about the pirate radio mediascape because it's nice to know that there are still pirates out there whose furtive efforts have kept wind in their sails.

David Widginton is a media activist and mobile journalist based in Montreal. His blog is <http://burningbillboard.org>



d'bi young. *Wombanifesto*. • [www.dbiyoung.net](http://www.dbiyoung.net)

Invoking Elegua to open the musical floodgates, d'bi young wastes no time in unleashing bold soul sonic vibrations that ripple through the body and mind, swiftly but surely navigating the resulting rapids to carry us along on the raging (as in outrageous and outraged) river of her creativity.

Gathering together all the diasporic riches of dub poetry, reggae/dancehall, hip hop, jazz, and Cuban riddims, then rocking them all in the arms of Yemaya and Oshun and Jamaicanizing them as Yemojah ("yemojah moon phoenix"), d'bi mashes it up in a wombanifesto stylee. Deftly integrating the sacred bata drums, santeria chants, a capella beatboxing, and electronic beats (not to mention some hot Cuban fiddle/guitar licks), her musical scope and execution is simply staggering! This is music with no borders that ranges freely all over the map, but unlike the scattershot approach of so much multicultural music released these days, d'bi knows precisely how all the musical pieces of the African diasporic puzzle fit together, layering and juxtaposing them in a way that enhances their collective impact while retaining their individual cultural reference points. This is no watered-down-lowest-common-denominator music mosaic churned out by the record industry with only market share in mind, but a vibrant and succulent black

bushwoman sound mix that is a joy for the ears to hear.

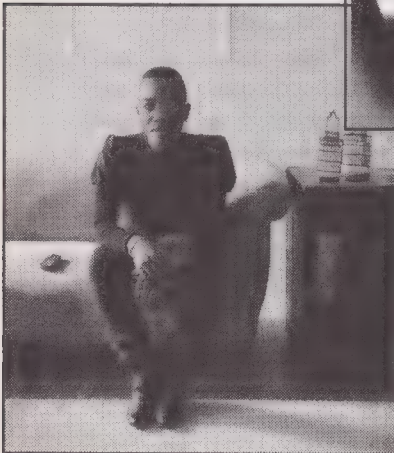
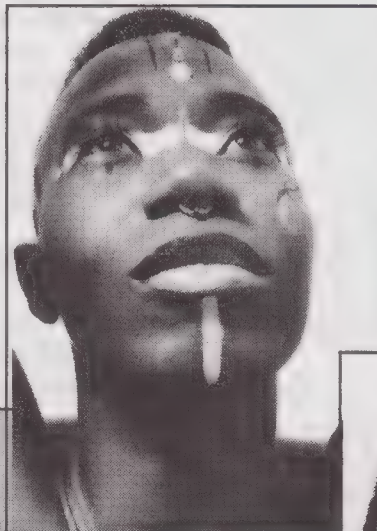
Her socially conscious lyrics are the icing on the cake. Neither pulling political punches nor fleeing from raw sensuality, her songs are nothing short of revelatory. They possess a pride in being "comfortable in me" ("gawdess in me") which is contagious and a get up/stand up quality that is inspiring rather than being merely didactic in the insipid way that the work of less talented purveyors of "message songs" can be. No topic is too controversial for her lyrical attack: from incest ("children of a lesser god") to Eurocentrism in the women's movement ("ain't I a oomaan"); from Orwellian echoes of genocide in Iraq to torture at Guantanamo prison ("animal farm"); from a nuff respect celebration of the resilience of the African woman in slavery days done in collaboration with former Black Liberation Army stalwart Nehanda Abiodun, who now has become the

"godmother" of Cuban hip hop during her years of exile there ("ase yemaya") to a deeply personal act of sabotage

aimed directly at prying loose the deathgrip of gender rigidity ("gendah bendah"), which is livicated "to all those fucking with gender lines" today. Reversing the Rasta curse of "blood clot," d'bi refuses the shame associated with those words and rejoices in the strength which her monthly cycles represent by singing, "I bleed because I'm a warrior" ("blood").

Drawing on the words of ancestors gone, she quotes Bob Marley's "Johnny Was," and, more obliquely perhaps, dub poet Mikey Smith's "Mi CYaaN beLieve iT" for an overstanding of the trials and tribulations of a ghetto youth shot down by the police ("Sailor Johnny"). Then, by passing the mic to a living ancestor, former Black Panther Assata Shakur (now living in Cuban exile), d'bi posits a revolution of peace and love that is rooted in mind, heart and spirit but which still proclaims the need to fight against oppression when necessary ("revolution"). This is not a revolution based upon the "commercialization" and "trivialization" alluded to by the guest Cuban rappers anonimo consejo in relation to what history misrepresents as the American Revolution, the latter term being a misnomer that merely masks the stark reality of the "prison industrial shitstem" which "sucks my blood/my oil" and "rapes my trees" ("amerikkkan dreaming").

And coming full circle in her closing number ("satta"), she gives a fierce shout-out to her own bio-artistic lineage in the person of anita stewart by passionately singing the words, "Like my mother before me, I will continue the fight to be free." Ase!





# From Saguaros to Sawgrass: Thirty Years of Ecological Resistance

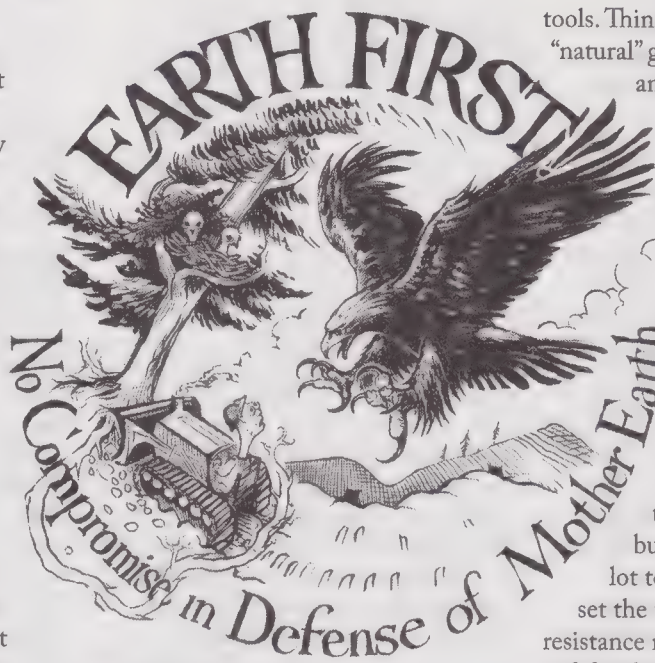
## Announcement from the *Earth First! Journal* Collective

**T**he *Earth First! Journal* is celebrating its 30th anniversary of independent media with a 120+ page edition featuring contributions from a slew of radical environmentalists, surrealists, voices from indigenous resistance movements, the Greek insurrection, as well as artists and writers from CrimethInc., the IWW, the Beehive Collective, the Just Seeds cooperative and more. Included are articles on mountaintop removal in Appalachia, resistance to Shell in Nigeria, BP in the Gulf and free-states in Cascadia.

The content will highlight the history of *EF!J* with a special focus on the last decade of the movement which has spread out through and beyond the west coast forests cross-pollinating analysis and tactics with hundreds of environmental, anarchist, social justice and anti-globalization movements internationally.

During this time of chaos and celebration, the Journal Collective is preparing for a big move from the deserts of Tucson, Arizona, to the swamps of South Florida, from the militarized borderlands with Mexico to the militarized Free Trade headquarters of Central and South America, from the hot and dry to the hot and wet. We feel moving the *Journal* from time to time is healthy. New locations, new collectives, can breath new life. Giving new communities the opportunity to engage in the radical publishing process spreads the skills and knowledge of decades in journalism.

Also, the *Journal* is changing its publication schedule from six newspapers yearly to a quarterly, and from a tabloid to a bound publication,



supplemented by newsletters and an online news source that is updated daily at [newswire.earthfirstjournal.org](http://newswire.earthfirstjournal.org). A new speakers bureau, which includes a lineup of Green Scare survivors, climbing trainers, and campaign organizers, is ready to head out through the territories, spreading the fire of eco-resistance to small town rebels, urban insurrectionaries, and college audiences.

The *Earth First! Journal* started in the Southwest with the "No compromise" stance of the movement drawn from the uncompromising wild of the harsh desert. It changed bio-regions a few times, moving to Missoula, Montana, to Eugene, Oregon, and back to Tucson. One issue of the *Journal* was created in the North Woods of Maine. And this November it is moving to the Florida Everglades, the 30 million acres of swamp circumnavigated by million dollar condos, a slave-wage agricultural system around Immokalee, and the "greenest" of the energy empire's

tools. Think new nuke reactors, new "natural" gas pipelines, power plants and fracking. Think new biotech hubs, vivisection labs, replacing pine forests. Think off-shore drilling, tar-balls washing up on shore, coastal dead zones. Think urban land rights movements such as Take Back the Land and anti-infrastructure movements like Everglades Earth First!

Sure it's a mosquito infested tourist colony of the empire, but there is a lot to save and a lot to destroy. The *EF!J* can help set the tone for a global land-based resistance movement where gators and freedom fighters have learned to thrive at the periphery, waiting like a rising ocean tide to move in when the entire economic facade busts for the final time. Coconuts, mangoes, starfruit and an entire wild and flourishing ecosystem of land and marine life wait to greet us on the other side.

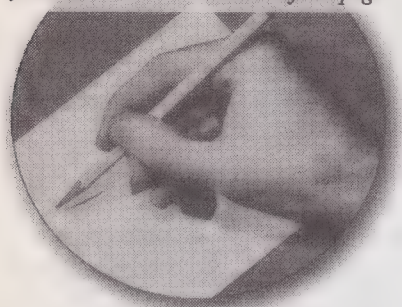
Long standing print sources like the *Earth First! Journal* and *Fifth Estate* are on the front lines of independent media, which means that our publications are vital yet precarious.

In an era when publications are dying off nearly as fast as the Earth's vast list of species, the *Journal* collective is happy to say we are fighting on. We look forward to our 30th anniversary, strengthened and reinvigorated through the solidarity of our radical readers.

We love you all, (send submissions!)  
The *Earth First! Journal* Collective

**FE editors' note:** Subscribe!  
[earthfirstjournal.org](http://earthfirstjournal.org)





and other basics by a third from the previous year.

Other indications of the country stepping away from its commitment to social equality are present. When Raúl Castro says his government will scale back controls on small businesses, combined with increased foreign investment in tourism and large scale industrial projects, it seems any semblance of socialism will soon be in name only.

Even state subsidies for cigarettes which allow the heavy smoking Cuban population to buy the cancer sticks at 40 cents a pack are being eliminated, but that will undoubtedly be a good thing for the people.

Can the incredible projects and the spirit of revolution present in so many people Michael and I met in Cuba be extinguished by the rush in of foreign capital and the return of more private enterprise? Probably, but we can hope that it doesn't

However, hope is a pretty thin reed on which to base a future.

### Hard Cider Recipe

One of my friends was reminiscing about his youth and told me about fond memories of making hard cider using a recipe that the *Fifth Estate* published every autumn. Where could I find a copy of this recipe?

~Clinton Andrews

(P.S. I still remember Plum Street)

**FE replies:** If you are able to remember Plum Street, no wonder you can't remember the recipe! Plum Street was Detroit's version of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district in the mid-

1960s where the *Fifth Estate* moved its offices in 1966. It was there that the publication established itself in the city's hip arts and political communities.

Back before the days when you could look up anything on Google (including at least 50 recipes for hard cider), the directions probably appeared in our cooking column, "Eat It!", which featured healthy cooking instructions (rare back in those days) and exotic confections such as hash brownies.

### A usually sober-for-the-revolution FE contributing editor (Don LaCoss)

**adds:** Interested readers ought to check out our friend Sandor Ellix Katz's book from 2003, *Wild Fermentation: The Flavor, Nutrition and Craft of Live Culture Foods*. Sandor includes two hard cider recipes in his chapter on wines, mead, and ginger beer; one takes about a week, the other about six months—plan accordingly!

### On Wilhelm Reich

While Patrick Dunn's thesis in "*A Radicalization of Reich*," Summer 2010 *FE*, ("wild, ungovernable pleasures" as a practice for the accumulation of power towards "tearing down the material structures that make these pleasures unattainable") is exciting, I take issue with certain assumptions and attitudes throughout.

I find it quite uninteresting to frame our current social nightmare as being the aftermath of some only vaguely defined and certainly, though not necessarily knowingly, pseudo-Christian ("Fall-of-Man") "prehistoric crisis."

Quoting Dunn: "...one thing is clear (*is it really? I disagree so hard*): Something occurred to precipitate the shift in the physical relations among early humans, and the wound has never healed." Seriously? Can we please get over social utopianism? Are you actually fighting for a social body without conflict?

I find it over-the-top naive to imagine relationships without conflict and violence. In fact, Pierre Clastres in *Society Against the State*, an author Dunn has probably read, writes about tribal warfare as a decentralizing,

somewhat anarchising force. Dunn uses it as another indicator of our post-Fall condition.

"Bodies that once moved in harmony became alienated and divided," he writes. It is mind-boggling to me that one can make such a statement. Consider the complete impossibility of verifying the fact of "bodies (having) once moved in harmony." This is a philosophical experiment at best, with no empirical evidence whatsoever. To construct an argument on such fantastical, quasi-religious grounds is totally nonsensical.

I would offer that it's pretty commonly accepted that humans are now at the highest point of alienation from our bodies and from each other in their known history, which is probably good enough grounds on which to build this argument. So why make up total bullshit about the unknowable past? It runs the risk of turning a good essay into a ridiculous one.

And, a quick note on the whole "origins of alienation" issue that fascinates so many. If you cannot come up with a fucking good excuse for early humans to choose the path of alienation and misery, it might be hard to construct a solid argument for its sudden appearance. Or, maybe it's not so simple as it would seem.

"The logic born of our prehistoric crisis—enshrined in the image of Adam and Eve hiding their naked bodies—culminates in the disembodied rationality of technological civilization. The destructive capacity of this logic is directly responsible for our present catastrophe, sexual and social."

If I read that correctly, Dunn is actually saying that the "prehistoric crisis" carried in it the seed of our present society. This somewhat carelessly glosses over individuals' historical agency in favour of a vision of history carrying along autonomously from human intervention, spurred on by some omnipotent "logic." I'm not saying Dunn views history this way; this is

continued on page 36



simply what I think comes across in these statements.

I see history as a struggle, not just a class struggle, I might add, where the outcome has never been predestined, although it seems to be closing in on us at an alarming rate. I also think that it's a bit much to say that the same logic is at work in today's prisons as was in societies thousands of years ago. It's a theoretical leap for sure, but in my opinion it just doesn't sound plausible.

"The sovereign, self-propelled human body is reduced to a lifeless cyborg." "Despite having nine hundred Facebook friends, nobody knows anyone else." "Pleasure is ritualized at best..." etc. While I can perhaps understand the appeal of hyperbole or exaggeration, these passages and many that follow seem so awkward, as if Dunn is trying to convince us that it's worse than it actually is.

I mean it's fucking horrible out here, but who is this "we" that he writes of who are "governed by the normalizing images of celebrity culture and mass media?" There's no room to manoeuvre inside of Dunn's blanket statements on our lives. Maybe all he's missing is a touch of subtlety in his attempts to assess our condition, but let's just say that when one seeks to impose a general diagnosis of society's emotional/social state, one had better be crafty and careful. I just thought it was weak.

I would be happy to have the thoughts in this piece brought forth in a way that didn't seem so dualistic and instead offered a certain continuum of alienation and conflict. Utopia is a beautiful idea for fantasy and play, but in terms of theory it eats shit pretty hard. Ok, let's fucking party on dead cops,  
~negative prole (via e-mail)

**Patrick Dunn replies:** The purpose of my article is not to construct an argument. If the article has a point, it is to suggest that sexuality might be at the root of the logic of alienation.

There is no evidence that prehistoric

humans lived free of conflict or suffering. Such a condition seems neither attainable nor desirable. The desire to overcome alienation, on the other hand, is the basis for all radical thought. This leads to reflection on the nature of our present condition, and on the events of which it is the result.

My suggestion is that the alienating logic embodied in the institutions of civilization—symbolic thought, division of labor, domestication—is inseparable from an original consciousness of violence rooted in human sexuality.

We do not know what a non-alienated sexual experience would be. But if we wish to attain such an experience, we are inevitably led to imagine the sexuality of humans prior to the emergence of civilization. This is true even, and perhaps especially, when empirical evidence is scarce.

### **Solidarity With the Reykjavik Nine**

I would like to make a simple request. As you all should know, Iceland's first post-collapse trials are going on. Nine people The Reykjavik Nine are being accused of charges that could give them between one and 16 years in prison.

We really, really need international solidarity, and that is my request. There is a web site focusing on the case, [www.rvk9.org](http://www.rvk9.org), with an English section, not great but with the information needed.

A new piece was just written for the Bristol, England Anarchist Bookfair that is taking place while these words are written. So far, the text has only been published here: [bristolabc.wordpress.com](http://bristolabc.wordpress.com), but it needs to go much further. This is not a great, long and complicated analysis, but simply an update on what the case is about and where it is situated inside the court system at the moment.

The proceedings will start soon, so spread the word and do solidarity actions! The Icelandic state, government, and nation worries about criticism from abroad. Therefore, solidarity actions are very important for putting pressure on those in power, making them scared and

last but not least, giving a good story to the people. So far there has only been one solidarity demonstration, which took place in Barcelona. Read it here to get some inspiration: [savingiceland.org/2010/07/reykjavik-nine-solidarity-demonstration-in-barcelona/](http://savingiceland.org/2010/07/reykjavik-nine-solidarity-demonstration-in-barcelona/).

When an article on the case was published on an anarchist news site recently, it got comments about how "this has nothing to do with anarchism," and other bullshit, probably because the article was not written in militant, insurrection rhetoric. Please don't take up this elitist crap.

There are nine people being oppressed by the state, anarchists' common enemy, for taking the first steps in an revolt that later toppled a government. Some of them are anarchist and some not; who cares!? Their lives are threatened.

~With the rest of hope I am able to have,  
Siggi Pönk, • Reykjavik, Iceland

### **Greek Anarchists**

I was delighted to see the *Fifth Estate* reprinting informative materials about the Greek anarchists. [See: *In Critical and Suffocating Times*, Summer FE 2010.]

What most of conventional media has ignored is that large segments of Greek society, especially well-educated youth, have been attracted to the anarchist banner by their revulsion against authoritarian rule, whatever the political branding. The same revulsion can be found in the recent Greek film, *Dogtooth*, a box office hit in Greece and a prize winner at Cannes.

A new group calling itself the Sect of the Revolution has been proclaimed as anarchist by Western media. The very name of the organization, its murder of an investigative journalist, its threat of random violence, and its rhetoric indicate that is likely a right-wing group posing as a left formation. This allows them to destabilize a social democratic government while besmirching the anarchist banner.

If so, this likely indicates the worst elements of the Greek right have some broader political agenda in mind. Another possibility is that it is a



criminal enterprise using ideological camouflage. Least likely is that it is a devolution of an anarchist group to nihilism.

More significantly, following the unintended death of three bank employees at a major rally, some 300 anarchists had a semi-public assembly in Athens to discuss how to avoid such outcomes, the exact opposite of the blanket violence espoused by the *Sect of Revolution*.

What is most obvious, however, is that there is enormous social anger in Greece that could erupt into a mass movement in which genuine anarchist thought would be a leading force.

~Dan Georgakas • Amherst, Mass.  
(FE Note: The writer is the consulting editor of the film magazine, *Cineaste*.)

### **Tyranny of Capital**

I wish to thank you for Andrew Dobbs' article, "Conspiracy or Anarchy," in the Summer 2010 *Fifth Estate*. I tire greatly of the 9/11 conspiracy people, as well as all the other crazies who think focusing on an abstraction will solve everything.

There is often a distraction from the wider picture of the tyranny of capital and ecological collapse. I find that most seem to be either apolitical in terms of working toward a world free of poverty and oppression, or right-wing, god, guts, and guns people.

Thank you also for the interview with Ursula K. Le Guin in the Spring 2010 *Fifth Estate*. Her books, *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed*, both blew my mind when I read them so many years ago. They still do.

~Mark Nevin • Lancaster, Penn.

(FE Note: both issues mentioned are available for \$4 each, payable through PayPal or by mail to our P.O. Box)

### **No Supernatural**

Don book review of Guy Ducornet's *Surrealisme et atheisme* was interesting and entertaining [See "Surrealism & Atheism," Summer 2010 *FE*.] There have been and are lots of parody churches and religions around including Church of the Everlasting Collection, Church of Banana Bread, Our Lady of Perpetual Collection, ad infinitum. Surrealists have a valuable contribution

to make as humor, ridicule, and parody can be very effective.

LaCoss mentions the 1948 Surrealist, anti-clerical tract, "Dogs of God;" it should be noted that the medieval phrase, Domini Canes, (Dog of God) referred to real dogs who barked at beggar priests, which ironically is what the author is doing in his book. However, he has fallen into a semantics/sophistry trap by using "supernatural," a word designed to create confusion and has done so for hundreds of years. There are only two worlds: the natural visible, and the natural invisible. The latter now being explored by quantum mechanics. There is no supernatural anything.

~Robert J. Zani • Tennessee Colony, Tex.

### **Holy Cocoons**

I'm sure you know the story of Florida minister, Terry Jones, who had planned to burn a pile of Qur'ans on September 11. While this was being written he cancelled his international Qur'an burning day. The irony of the official response, from mass murderers and liars at the top of the political feeding chain, is not lost. The enormous power of symbols shows how a man with a pile of books can be seen as worse than those who are objectively creating new generations of "enemies" through ruinous predation and profiteering warfare.

Look who's worried about sending a bad signal! The pyromaniac pastor (who has since called off his stunt after a phone call from Secretary of War Robert Gates) was proposing to burn the Qur'an in the name of his own rancorous "faith" while remaining apparently blind to the desecration of humanity that his church has created. Ignorant of the historical roots of Christianity, he would step up to make war on a fixed idea in the name of his own fixed idea. Jones represents the uptight, fascist character of a Reichian "Little Man" who seeks to destroy cardboard foes. He falsifies a complex reality so he can think of himself as good.

I can't help but think of street theater here, in a hypothetical scene, and so as to stand outside the context of "religious war" or "taking sides," every holy book is gathered, pages are torn from them and pasted to people until eventually

the person is covered up in religious scripture. This could be done through a body suit or shrink wrap over clothes for visual impact.

Layers of wheat paste, papier mâché or other items can be added so the person is literally weighed down by the words of religion. Eventually only air holes are left and the person is placed on the ground to dry. The spirit-extortionists begin pasting others with the pages, all the while telling them in soothing voices that they're helping them out, saving their souls, doing their thinking for them.

Soon there would be a small crowd laid helplessly on the ground. Some of the cocoons could be maneuvered into chess-like positions as ideological support for simulated global crises.

With the scripture cocoons now hardened, a few people would gradually begin to struggle against their bonds, as if finally realizing their confinement. Bystanders might react and start helping them, breaking the spell of control that the priests have placed over humanity.

In the spirit of Monty Python or the Marx Brothers, the priest types could be chased away by those no longer weighed down. Bits and pieces of the religious armoring would lay discarded. Nietzsche, Sade or a surrealist writer could be quoted on behalf of erotic imagination and the magic of the senses, against the stifling pontifications of those who fondle their doctrines in fear of life. If it were a film, a sudden downpour could further the decomposition of the religious cocoons while the priests fled for shelter.

~M.K. Shibek • Portland, Ore.

### **Gettin' Skooled**

I am writing in response to Joseph Smecker's *Commodifying Experience: The School of Tyrannical Indoctrination*. Summer 2010 *FE* highlighted some important perspectives surrounding the pitfalls of the public school system, I also see that many of his blanketing arguments and universal conclusions need further discussion and analysis.

It seems as though Smecker's arguments stem from two main ideas about education. One is that historical and



contemporary schooling comes from the interconnections between a capitalist reproduction model and what students learn in the classrooms, basically meaning that schools are vessels to indoctrinate certain political, economic, social and cultural values in young people. The second idea is that public schools do not take into consideration non-western ways of knowing and therefore validate or reinforce a particular world view.

Starting with the first argument, Smecker maintains that certain ideological forces drive schools and help reproduce working class subjects. In the early and mid-19th century, Horace Mann and others in power, believed in compulsory public schools that would indeed create an obedient workforce. During the late 1830s, officials in Massachusetts argued for public schools because it would be cheaper than putting some of the new immigrants in prison (see Michael Katz's work).

However, as Horace Mann's idea of state run compulsory schooling began to unfold, we saw that students did not always follow the obedient route as Smecker suggests. For example, how do we take into account Voltairine de Cleyre, Emma Goldman, Alex Berkman or the IWW at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century? There is no mention of these people or organizations or for that matter, their analysis and critique of schools in Smecker's article.

Although Smecker offers some important points in his first argument regarding schools and obedience, leaving the analysis at the economic level has its limitations. In fact, Smecker leaves us with a cliffhanger and only offers us a "green praxis" as a solution current schooling practices.

If anyone has read anything about critical pedagogy, most know the work of Paulo Freire and his popular book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In Smecker's article there is no reference to any of his ideas and movements to disrupt banking education or oppressive educational practices or even to his discussions surrounding the "respect for the autonomy of the student."

Additionally, in 1983, Henry Giroux wrote an important book, *Theory and Resistance in Education: Towards a Pedagogy for the Opposition*. Giroux called into question whether individuals living under capitalism passively take on the role of obedient workers and become company folks—rather he created a more complex argument that individuals use their agency to expose and resist certain power structures.

It is not that I disagree with Smecker that schools reproduce certain social, political, economic and cultural practices. However, it is somewhat dangerous to see the analysis cut short and to assume that these processes are universal. Many teachers understand that schools reinforce particular monocultural and global capitalist perspectives, yet they struggle to contest power from what Foucault describes as "multiple fronts."

I don't particularly see state-run schools as ideal sites to construct mutual, non-hierarchical and voluntary learning spaces, but I do acknowledge they are important spaces. Many critical educators are working under the oppressive state, but that does not always mean that they are incapable of navigating and sabotaging the structures that are encroaching upon student autonomy, creativity or our abilities to think beyond western and monocultural thinking.

Yes, it is important to expose public schools for what they are and the twisted values they uphold, but it is equally important to acknowledge that these spaces have the potential to drill holes in the structures that attempt to make schooling a mundane, monocultural and reproductive machine. This means that we can create something out of the ruins of these "tyrannical and indoctrination" mechanisms. There are individuals and collectives that are doing this in situated spaces in the here and now and they definitely need our support.

~Robert Haworth • La Crosse, Wis

### Dead End

In the Summer 2010 issue of *FE*, my article, "Cul de Sac," was printed. Unfortunately, it was edited, and parts were even re-written, without

my consultation. Such was this editing job that my intention to engage anarcho-primitivists on this interesting topic have probably now been lost; and, moreover, my critique of all "revolutionaries" was changed to a critique of "traditional left revolutionaries," which seriously thwarts the meaning of my piece. I was surprised and shocked that my words and the meaning I intended were altered without any consultation with me.

If you would like to read the unadulterated text, go to: [salon.lettersjournal.org/viewtopic.php?pid=5929#p5929](http://salon.lettersjournal.org/viewtopic.php?pid=5929#p5929).

It will also be appearing on the Letters Journal web site. You may also like to visit our Wikipedia page for more links: Monsieur Dupont.

For a human community,  
*Le Garçon Dupont • Australia*

**Walker Lane responds:** All texts submitted to this publication, as with most, are edited for style, length, grammar, etc. The objective is to improve on the author's original manuscript and present it in the best manner possible while retaining the author's voice and intent.

The article mentioned above was particularly problematic and needed an immense amount of work. After submitting it back to the author with different versions, time constraints meant he did not see the final version as our publication date loomed.

We thought the article was substantially improved though the editing process; the author evidently did not.





Our full potential may be limited, but for good reasons, and perhaps for the best. It's a fantastic situation and means something different to each person involved; as much as you can try and observe the process, it's not something to be rushed. Along the way it is crucial that each give back, and I'd still suggest even giving it your all!

The Trumbullplex is an inspiring, still-growing 17 year-old, and when it matures, it will figure out how to deal with issues like folks who are not contributing enough to its well-being and to the community's, and then it will be a force to be reckoned with. One only hopes that opportunities for all to learn and grow when questions are asked or mistakes are made will not get lost in the confusion, critiques or complacency.

We need to make our lives in relation to one another sacred, not scared (if it were all only a simple spelling error!). Trumbull perhaps unwittingly helps others find that in themselves.

So, what I have learned about doing-it-yourself is that if you do decide to do things that help others, then commit to it regardless of whether you get back up or not—do so without fear or regret and you will empower yourself.

If along the way you begin to burn-out and wonder whether it is possible for people to ever resolve their differences to build something amazing together, then just remember, doing nothing is not an option.

Jhon Clark (a.k.a, Hone A) is a DIY community builder/repairman, slater, poet, partner, parent, and member of the Trumbullplex Theatre collective. He hopes to write a history of the Trumbullplex in time for its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. If you are ex-plex, have stories, photos, rare flyers feel free to write him at 2931 Poplar, Detroit MI 48208 or email [trumbullplex@gmail.com](mailto:trumbullplex@gmail.com)

## correction

*The Politics of Carnival*, that appeared in our Summer 2010 edition, was not properly credited. It originally appeared in *No Quarter* 4.5. *No Quarter* describes itself as a zine about radical history. For more info, check out [anarchistpirates.blogspot.com](http://anarchistpirates.blogspot.com). The photo on the story's lead page was taken by Nicola Krebill. *Fifth Estate* apologizes for the omission.

# Outlaw Midwifery

**SQUAT: An Anarchist Birth Journal put out its first issue this past June...**

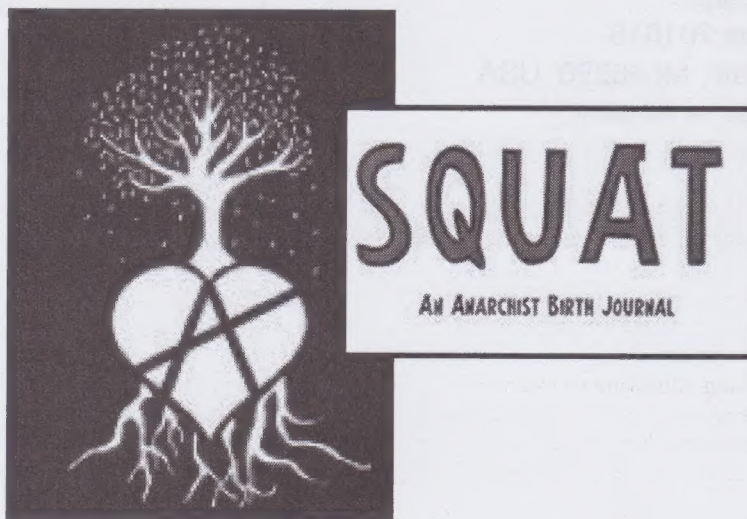
**A**nd two months later, its first annual birth conference, "SQUAT Camp," which took place in Washington state from August 10–13th. Usually, midwifery/birthwork conferences are outrageously inaccessible, from their location (high-end hotels) to the cost (upwards of \$100 per day). SQUAT organized a conference in the woods, camping style, for \$30 for the four-day event (plus meals included). Workshops were a little different than what you'd usually find at a mainstream birth conference, too: "Prison as a Form of Violence Against Women," "She's, He's, and They's Giving Birth," "Abortion Doulas and the History of Abortion in Midwifery," and "Racism and Classism in the Midwifery Movement" were just a few of the fifteen different workshops organized.

SQUAT Camp was great fun, and welcomed people with a variety of backgrounds and ties to birthwork, from midwives to doulas, sex activists to childbirth educators, kids and parents. Overall, the conference was able to bring together a large number of radical birthworkers and families to share experiences and skills, and to have critical conversations about what work can be done to help support each other as we engage with the beauty of birth and, simultaneously, continue addressing the politics surrounding birth.

For four days, the woods were filled with the sounds of impassioned conversations about the intersections of birth, capitalism, gender, race, alternative medicine, sustainability, and a variety of other topics. Organizers hope to make SQUAT Camp #2 even better and invite everyone to join them again next summer.

**FE editors' note:** Since this summer's SQUAT Camp, two more issues of their magazine have been produced with information and perspectives on a variety of issues related to pregnancy, birth, and reproductive politics.

**You can contact SQUAT at:**  
**[Squattingbirth@gmail.com](mailto:Squattingbirth@gmail.com)**





original artwork *Mad Scientist*  
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